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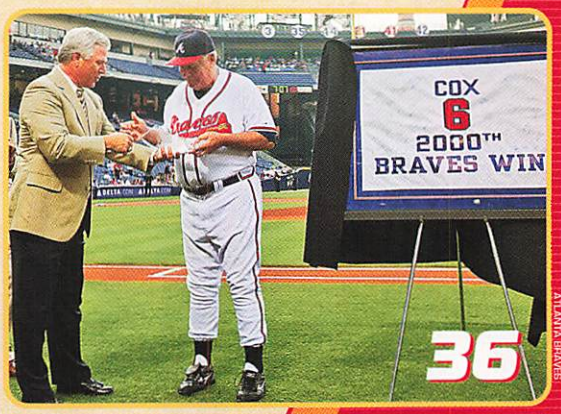

ATLANTA BRAVES

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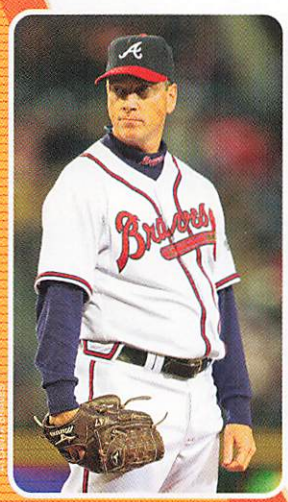

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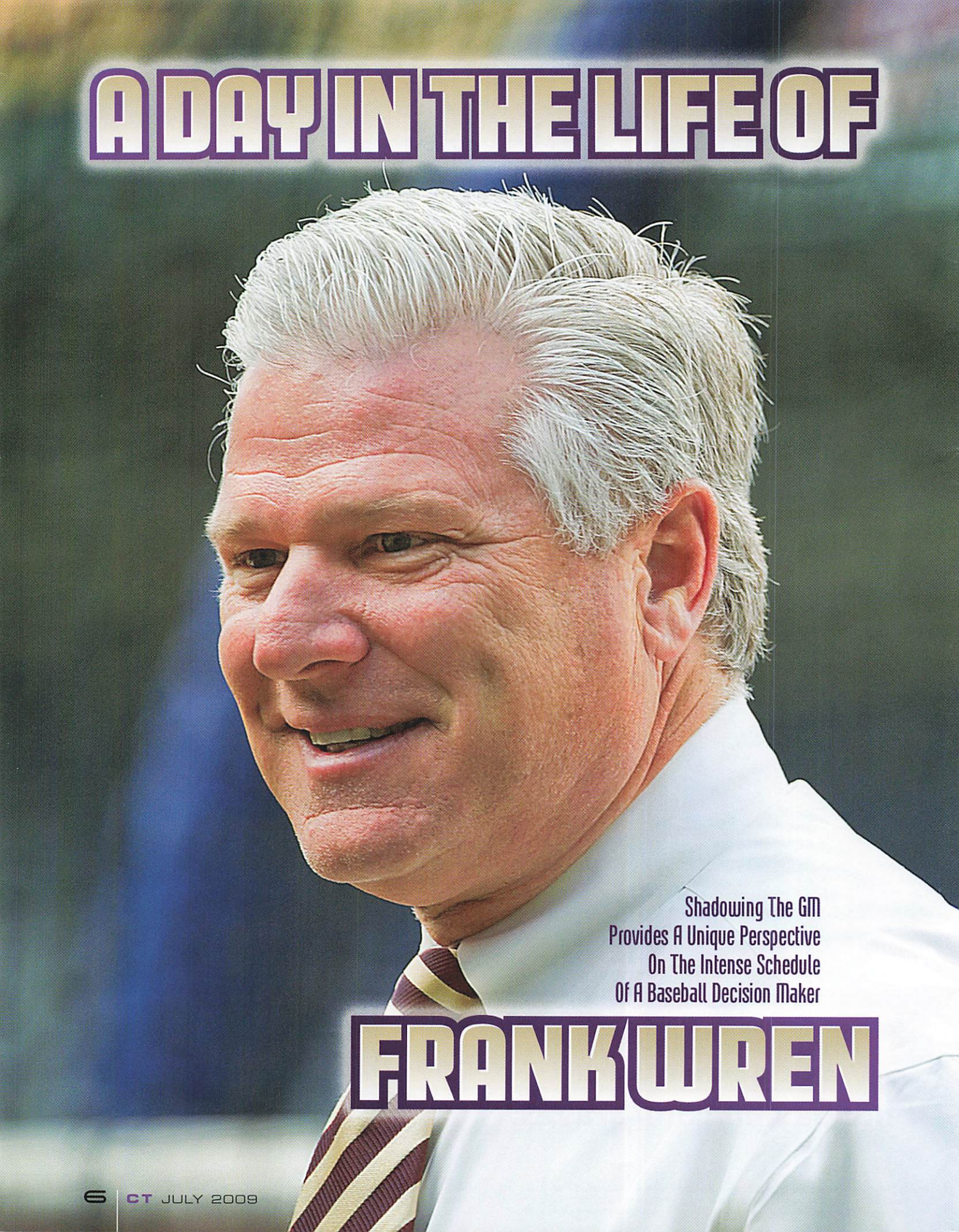


Shadowing The GM
Provides A Unique Perspective
On The Intense Schedule
Of A Baseball Decision Maker

FRANK WREN

ChopTalk reporter Patty Rasmussen shadowed Braves' general manager Frank Wren on June 9, which also happened to be the day of the Major League Baseball draft, for a behind-the-scenes look at his busy workday. Wren, 51, is in his 10th season with the Braves and his second season as GM since taking over the position Oct. 11, 2007, when John Schuerholz was promoted to president.

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

Before Frank Wren even crosses the threshold of his Turner Field office, he's at least an hour into his workday.

"I get up, eat breakfast, and read the newspaper at home," he says. "I leave my house at 9 a.m. during the season."

He's in the car for a 30- to 40-minute commute from Peachtree City, located south of the ballpark, but that time doesn't go to waste.

"I listen to all my game reports on the drive in," says Wren. "I have a game report on voice mail from the four full-season minor league managers and pitching coaches. They leave a very detailed report of what happened in the game and what the players did, down to almost every at-bat. They give you a flavor of the game.

"That's followed by the pitching coach. He leaves a separate report, talking about how hard a guy threw, how many pitches he threw, how many strikes, that sort of thing."

The process of listening to the reports takes about 30 minutes of Wren's drive time, but by the time he arrives at Turner Field, he has a good sense of what's going on in the farm system and usually has some questions or thoughts to talk over with his staff.

10:00 A.M.

Wren arrives at Turner Field later than usual.

"I usually get here around 9:30," he says. "But after the 15 innings (versus Pittsburgh the night before) and getting home at 1:30 a.m., we all pushed it back and said we'd get here at 10 a.m."

Having already listened to the game reports from the minor league managers and pitching coaches, Wren has his first conversation with his assistant GM, Bruce Manno, and director of baseball administration, John Coppolella.

The group debriefs about what they've seen and heard.

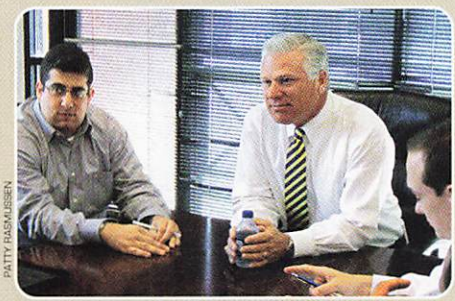
"We talk about not just our game, but highlights from other games we've seen," says Wren.

After 30 minutes, they break up and go to their respective offices to answer e-mail, phone calls, clear out inboxes, and gather more information.

"I read the online stuff when I get here," he says. "I read USA Today, all the major websites, ESPN, FOX, and (ESPN sportswriter) Buster Olney's blog which points you to a lot of papers. Once you do that you have a pretty good sense of what's going on in baseball."

11 A.M.

Wren is scheduled to speak to the 24 people involved in the Braves Trainee Program. The trainees work in specific departments including public relations, game entertainment, community affairs, and sales and marketing and are already sitting around the conference table when



PATTY RASMUSSEN

Wren tells the 24 people in the Braves Trainee Program that working in pro sports is "a grind, plain and simple. It's got to be something you have a passion for..."

Wren walks in. He takes a seat at the head of the table and begins to address the troops.

"It's nights like last night that make you appreciate the opportunity in one of two ways," he says. "You either appreciate the game and you enjoy the winning, or you realize, 'These days are too long for me. This is not the career I want.' So, one way or another, when you finish this program, you're going to have a sense of what working in professional sports is about. It's a grind, plain and simple. It's got to be something you have a passion for, or it's got to be something you enjoy."

He tells the trainees that in an organizational meeting last October, over half the 100-plus employees in the room went through the same trainee program.

"So, we know this program works," he adds. "It gives you a good look at which parts of the business, which parts of sports, you'd like to be involved in."

After about 10 minutes, Wren opens the floor for questions. They range from, "How did you get in the business" to "What are your thoughts on the draft."

Wren uses examples from his own experience to stress the need for the trainees to think outside the box, to innovate, and to look for ways to make themselves valuable to their organization.

12 NOON

Wren finishes talking to the trainees and meets with Braves president John Schuerholz and chairman and chief executive officer Terry McGuirk for lunch at the Capital City Club in downtown Atlanta. Lunch lasts about 90 minutes, and the three men discuss the previous night's game, the draft, and the upcoming road trip.

1:30 P.M.

Wren returns from lunch and goes to Manno's office for a quick talk before heading over to the clubhouse to talk with Bobby Cox for his first report of the day.

"By that time, the coaches are usually there, the players are starting to come in, and we get a feel for what Bobby and the coaches are thinking," says Wren. "It's not a formal meeting. We get a chance to talk to Bobby about possible deals in the works. Ask him if he likes certain players, whether he thinks they'll fit with the club."

This day, Wren, Manno and Cox are talking about pitcher Jo-Jo Reyes making his rehab start at Triple-A Gwinnett. Minutes later, trainer Jeff Porter pops in to tell them that Reyes re-injured his hamstring while covering first base. He faced just one batter, throwing five pitches.

2:30 P.M.

Wren and Manno move on to the "war room," the Braves Employee Training Room on the service level at Turner Field, which became the Atlanta Braves Draft Central several weeks leading up to the draft. There are four rows of tables, a large projection screen television on one wall with magnetic boards on either side. Magnets bearing the names and stats of players to be drafted are lined up in neat columns on the board.

Wren talks to Roy Clark, Braves director of scouting, and other scouts in town for the draft, getting the latest updates on what they are hearing from agents, players and teams about who will go in which round. But that doesn't mean Wren, who was a

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

ATLANTA BRAVES

PATTY RASMUSSEN

Wren chats with Roy Clark (L), director of scouting, in the draft "war room" while other scouts work on the Braves' strategy on draft day.

director of scouting in the Montreal Expos organization, will be sticking his two cents in during the actual draft.

"I've always been of the opinion that unless the GM has been out for a month scouting, looking at players, you wouldn't want to stick your nose in the draft, putting players in order and getting involved in that," he says. "It defeats the purpose of having your scouts out there for the past year seeing these players in workouts and showcases, seeing them play against competition. Our guys have a track record of doing an awfully good job, and I don't want to disrupt that.

"Amateur scouting is a very unique skill. I loved it when I was involved in it from 1985 until 1992. I lived it, breathed it, like these guys do. But it's not an area where you can stick your toe in the water. You're either completely in, involved daily, or you're not, and you have a chance to make a quick decision on incomplete information."

5:00 P.M.

After spending some time in the draft room and on the field during batting practice, where he visits with Pirates first baseman and former Brave Adam LaRoche, Wren goes back to his office to field calls from general managers in other organizations looking for draft updates.

"They are trying to figure out if their pick is going to be affected by ours," says Wren.

He explains that, owing to the fact that the Braves have the seventh draft selection, the picks became less obvious to those teams following the Braves, in this case the Cincinnati Reds and Detroit Tigers. Without tipping the Braves' hand, Wren gives those GMs an idea of whether or not they will need to employ their contingency plans.

6:00 P.M.

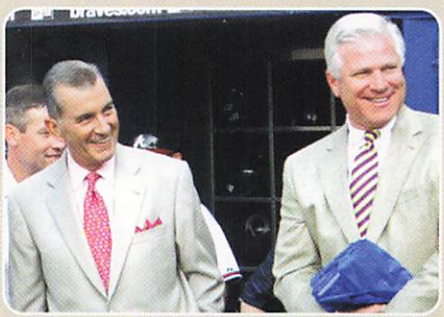
Wren returns to the draft room for another briefing from his scouts and to share information he received.

6:45 P.M.

Wren makes his way to the Braves' clubhouse side of the ballpark where he and Schuerholz meet with the game day staff for instructions regarding the on-field presentation recognizing Cox's 2,000th win as a Braves manager that occurred the night before.

7:05 P.M.

Wren walks onto the field with Schuerholz, Cox and Chipper Jones to present the manager with a crystal plaque and a framed flag, signed by all the Braves players, bearing the words, "Cox, 6, 2,000th Braves Win." The crowd is told a duplicate flag will fly under the Braves' flag atop the Chop House, the restaurant overlooking center field. The ceremony is brief. Schuerholz makes a few remarks before handing the microphone to Cox who tells the crowd that he's sorry it took him so long to get the wins! After posing for photos,



PATTY RASMUSSEN

Team president John Schuerholz (L) and Wren prepare to go onto the field for the pre-game ceremony honoring Bobby Cox for his 2,000th win with the Braves.

Wren leaves the field and goes up to the press box where he gets dinner from the dining room and settles into the GM's box to watch the ballgame.

7:12 P.M.

First pitch of the game. Wren looks through the game notes from the Pirates and Braves. A television built into the countertop gives him quick access for looking at close plays and replays. He tunes the television behind him to the MLB draft that is still in progress. Manno sits at the other end of the counter with a similar television set up. During the game, Schuerholz comes in for a few innings. They talk from time to time, but mostly watch the game in silence. Other than Braves officials, no one else sits in the box with Wren.

"No one, not my wife or my kids, are in here with me when I'm watching the game," he says.

9:47 P.M.

It was a fairly uneventful, 2-hour, 35-minute game, with the Braves winning, 4-3. Rafael Soriano came in to pitch the ninth inning and picked up his fifth save when he struck out the Pirates' Jack Wilson to end the game. Wren and Manno dash to the press elevator shortly after the end of the game to ride to the service level. Wren meets with Cox to get the manager's report, and soon after, he's in his car, driving home. He's been at Turner Field a full 12 hours.

It's a demanding job, a grind, as he told the trainees, but one Wren looks forward to every day.

"You have days when you can't wait to get in here, when you're working on an exciting project, and there are days when the club isn't playing well and you can't see the end in sight," he says.

"Last year, we didn't really see an end in sight. Without pitching, you can't compete, and when we had our pitching decimated last year, we didn't feel like we were going to compete. Those were some long days.

"Right now, when I come in every morning, everything leads up to 7 o'clock. My whole focus is getting the game going. I can't wait to get the game going. Last year, it was more of, 'Do we have to play the game?'

"It's clearly different this year. That doesn't mean it hasn't been frustrating, but it's been frustrating for those (players) down there, too. I think, to a man, they believe we can compete in our division. They feel like, every night, we should be doing better than what we're doing.

"But you never know when a team is going to hit their stride. Look at Houston. For the past couple of years, they struggle in the first half and can't seem to figure it out, play around .500, and then in the second half, they caught fire and play great baseball.

"That's why we really wanted to make the Nate McLouth deal when we did, to give us more time to have our team gel, come together and have more time to gain ground."

PATTY RASMUSSEN

Wren shows Bobby Cox the special crystal award the Braves had created for him to commemorate his 2,000th victory as the team's manager.

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NEW YORK METS

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23 THURSDAY 1:00 PM
SAN FRANCISCO GIANTS

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31 FRIDAY 7:30 PM
LOS ANGELES DODGERS

Publix Friday Night Fireworks

Peachtree TV

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14 FRIDAY 7:30 PM
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16 SUNDAY 1:30 PM
PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES

All-Star Sunday

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21 FRIDAY 7:30 PM
FLORIDA MARLINS

Publix Friday Night Fireworks

Spectacular post-game fireworks

23 SUNDAY 1:30 PM
FLORIDA MARLINS

All-Star Sunday

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PAINTING THE CORNERS

BY JAY BUSBEE

SENSE & SENTIMENTALITY, PART DEUX

ATLANTA BRAVES

Tom Glavine, the grip of his bread-and-butter circle changeup in clear view, wasn't able to end his Braves career on a high note, but very few ballplayers ever enjoy such a luxury.

AS SEAMLESS as the Braves have appeared throughout the years, many of the team's most prominent players never took the field with each other. Greg Maddux never pitched to Brian McCann. David Justice never shared an outfield with Andruw Jones. Chipper Jones never threw across the diamond to Sid Bream. As one player's Braves era ended, another began – though rarely on the exact same day.

You could make the argument that the foundation for the Braves' run of 14 straight titles began with two roster moves on August 12, 1987. On that day, then-GM Bobby Cox made the famous trade to get John Smoltz from Detroit. And since sending Doyle Alexander to Detroit left a hole in the Braves' rotation, Cox turned around and summoned a young lefty named Tommy Glavine to the bigs for the first time.

The Braves' streak has been over for quite awhile now, but you could, if so inclined, make the argument that its last remnants expired in June, with Glavine's release and the almost-simultaneous promotion of a much-heralded minor-leaguer, coincidentally named Tommy.

Tommy Hanson was six days shy of his first birthday (Aug. 28, 1987) when Glavine got his first major league win (Aug. 22, 1987). And while it's preposterous to even mention Hanson in the same breath with the Braves legends at the top of this column – Hanson has made but two starts, and with mixed results – there could be an appropriate symmetry at work here.

Ten years ago, I wouldn't have taken this news quite so calmly. Ten years ago, I would have wailed about how cruel and unfair this world is, where a Braves icon like Glavine can get cut loose like he did. (Of course, if they'd done so 10 years ago, with Glavine coming off a Cy Young award in 1998, they'd have been pilloried – but you know what I mean.)

However, I met the news of Glavine's release with an understanding nod of the head, that's all. Times change.

On a radio show the morning after Glavine's release, Pete Van Wieren pointed out that it was the first time since 1987 that the Braves would be playing a game without Glavine, Smoltz or Maddux on the roster. It's just a further sign that the old days are done and gone – but does that need to be an occasion for mourning?

Sportswriters looking to lasso a little cheap sentimentality will tell you how baseball mirrors life, that just as we must get used to change and loss at the ballpark, so, too, must we prepare for change and loss in our lives. It's a pleasant little sentiment, if a bit corny - and a bit morbid, too, if you take it out to its logical, eventually-we-all-lose extreme.

It also dodges a major aspect of change and loss – yes, they're inescapable, but they're also necessary. I had a great time in high school, but I'm not exactly screaming to go back to studying, taking exams, working at a grocery store and living under my parents' roof again.

Yes, it would be nice to have the mid-'90s Smoltz, Maddux and Glavine on the roster, but that's fairy-tale talk. The 2009 Smoltz, Maddux and Glavine are either retired or within sight of it. The Braves gave Glavine another shot at book-ending his Braves career, and it didn't work out.

I would have loved to see Glavine make one last start, to see him paint the outside black one last time and walk off the field to a standing ovation. Everyone would. But there's no guarantee that would have happened. It could just as easily go as badly as Smoltz's final game as a Brave, when he surrendered two runs and blew a save against Florida, or even as badly as Glavine's last game as a Met (seven runs in 1/3 of an inning to culminate the Mets' infamous 2007 fold).

Baseball rarely gives us Ted Williams-style moments, where a star homers in his final at-bat. For every career that ends with a triumphant tip of the cap to the crowd, a thousand end in front offices far from the field.

The question with Glavine – and with Smoltz before him, and Javy Lopez before him, and on and on, all the way back to Dale Murphy and Phil Niekro – is how much of an influence sentimentality should have in running a ballclub.

At what point do you decide a guy's number belongs on the wall of legends in left field, and not in your dugout? Is it better to let a player go a year too early or a year too late? If you do the former, the player can make you look bad by performing well on another team. But if you do the latter, you can stunt the growth of your ballclub for years to come.

Glavine is unquestionably one of the finest and most important Braves ever to don the tomahawk. It would have been nice for him to go out on a higher note, but it didn't happen. So, let's focus on the high points of his storied career – and hope that Hanson can live up to his immense promise.

MURPH & MURPH

CHRISTOPHER TOMLINSON

THE JUNIOR COLLEGE World Series has been a big deal in Grand Junction, Colo., for 52 years, and this year's event was no different. That was particularly true because of the presence of Dale Murphy - both of them.

Dale Murphy, the Braves Hall of Famer, was the keynote speaker at the annual banquet welcoming the teams. And thanks to tournament officials, 10-year-old Dale Murphy, a Little League catcher for the Mud Dogs in nearby Palisade, was given the opportunity to meet the two-time National League MVP with the same name on May 22, prior to the banquet.

Young Murph was all smiles when one of the most-popular players in Braves history autographed his Little League team picture for him. Della Dutcher, the youngster's grandmother, arranged the meeting by calling tournament officials when she learned who they scheduled as their speaker.

Dale Murphy meets Dale Murphy at the Junior College World Series in Grand Junction, Colo.

BATBOY'S MEMORIES

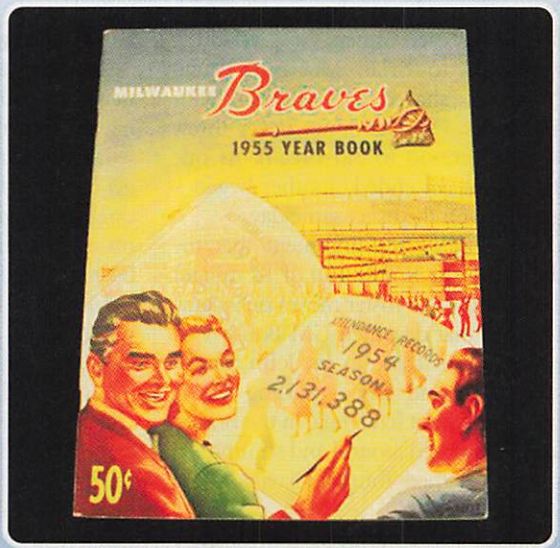
THE LATE SAMMY HOWARD was a Boston Braves batboy during the 1940s, which gave him an opportunity to meet some of that era's greatest stars. As a result, he built a large collection of signed memorabilia, and he continued his hobby after the club left Boston for Milwaukee prior to the 1953 season.

An auction held recently in Amesbury, Mass., included numerous pieces from Howard's collection. One item was a 1955 Milwaukee Braves yearbook signed by Hank Aaron. According to Isaiah Lewis of John McInnis Auctioneers who hosted the auction, the yearbook went for $120. That's a bargain price for a piece of Aaron memorabilia.

Howard also managed to get former heavyweight boxing champion Joe Louis to sign his 1948 World Series program, produced for the Boston Braves-Cleveland Indians meeting. It was the Braves' only World Series appearance between 1914 and 1957.

"He was a batboy for the Boston Braves," said Lewis about Howard, who was from Newburyport, Mass., about 40 miles north of Boston. "So, he collected programs, and he had autographs in a lot of these programs just from meeting and seeing people. It was a lot of World Series programs and things of that nature. It wasn't just the Boston Braves, but the Red Sox, Yankees, Brooklyn Dodgers and all sorts of teams.

"He died in his early 70s, I believe," said Lewis. "The story goes that he was actually given a Boston Braves uniform by the team, and he was buried in that."



SPECIAL

This 1955 Milwaukee Braves yearbook, signed by Hank Aaron, sold for $120 in an auction of the collection of former Braves batboy Sammy Howard.

The auction, conducted online as well, included signed items from Mickey Mantle, Ted Williams and Roger Maris. Altogether, the collection brought close to $5,000.

- STEVE FALL

HOW DO THEY DO THAT?

PREP FOR FIREWORKS SHOWS

ATLANTA BRAVES

FOLLOWING EVERY Friday home game during the regular season, Braves fans are treated to a spectacular fireworks display at Turner Field. The preparations that go into an eight-minute show start several months earlier.

The Braves work with a top fireworks entertainment firm called Melrose Pyrotechnics, a Chicago-based company with offices in Atlanta and six other cities, to coordinate 13 different Publix Friday Night Fireworks shows, all choreographed to music. Each show has a distinct theme, such as patriotism for Memorial Day weekend.

The process starts in December, when Joseph Simmons prepares the music track for each show. Simmons, the Braves' audio operations manager/sound designer, edits each eight-minute CD. Scott Cunningham, the club's director of game entertainment, reviews and tweaks the CDs before they are sent to Melrose Pyrotechnics in December or January.

"They have programmers and artists on staff that will program a fireworks show based to the music," said Cunningham. "So they sit at a computer and edit which firework [to use] and when each one will fire, with a three-second delay so it will explode right on that beat. It's all computer based."

On the day of the show, three or four representatives from Melrose Pyrotechnics arrive with their equipment and fireworks. They set up and make sure all is ready from their firing zone atop the 755 Club. They run through numerous safety checks, and the fire marshal visits to inspect everything. They even water down the roof.

After the last out of the game, it takes the Braves about 10 minutes to clear the fallout zone. Since Melrose uses "close proximity fireworks," this area is smaller than for other types of fireworks. But the Braves still clear the outfield stands, Coca-Cola Sky Field, and the Monument Grove area behind the 755 Club.

When everything is ready, Simmons rolls the CD. A cable runs to Melrose Pyrotechnics' computer so that it begins reading the time code on that CD, according to Cunningham. This determines what fireworks get shot into the air and precisely when that happens.

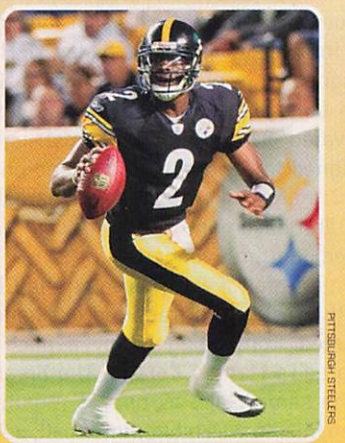
- STEVE FALL

SUPER TRIVIA

NAME TWO BRAVES players who have earned Super Bowl rings. Deion Sanders, an occasional Braves outfielder (1991-94), is an obvious part of the answer. He played on Super Bowl winning teams with the San Francisco 49ers and the Dallas Cowboys.

The other half of the answer is rather obscure, because it's a Braves farmhand, Dennis Dixon, a third-string quarterback with the defending Super Bowl champion Pittsburgh Steelers.

Technically, Dixon is still Braves property if he ever decides to play baseball again, which appears rather unlikely. In June 2007, the Braves selected Dixon as an outfielder in the fifth round of baseball's draft and signed him to a bonus of $150,000. Dixon, who had not played baseball since high school, batted .188 with six RBIs in 24 games in the Gulf Coast League and went 1-for-10 in four games with rookie-level Danville before returning to the University of Oregon for his senior year.



PITTSBURGH STEELERS

Steelers backup quarterback Dennis Dixon also happens to be Braves property - should he ever decide to play baseball.

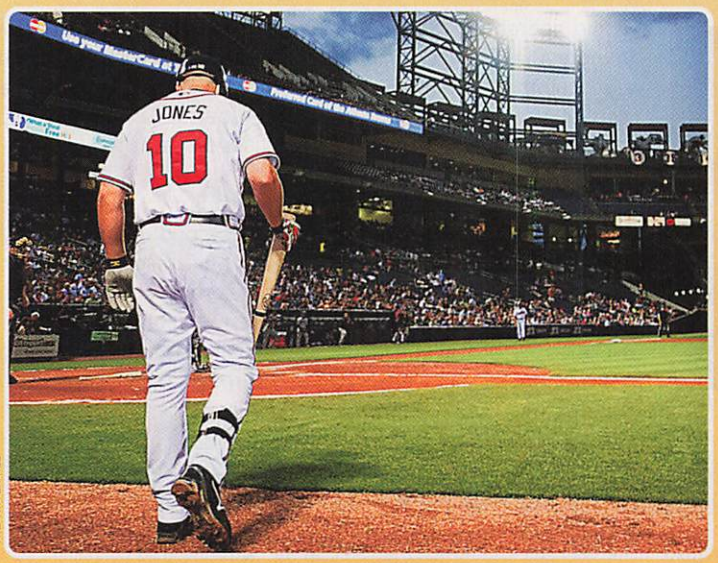
Dixon, 24, and the rest of the Steelers received their Super Bowl championship rings June 9. A fifth-round pick in the 2008 NFL draft, Dixon signed a three-year contract. In his rookie season, he played extensively in the pre-season, but during the regular season, his action consisted of throwing one pass for three yards in the final game.

Dixon was a leading candidate for the Heisman Trophy in 2007 before suffering a season-ending knee injury in the second half. With football his priority, Dixon is on the restricted list and remains under the Braves' control if he ever decides to pursue a baseball career

"He's pursuing another sport, and that's probably the direction in which he will continue," said Kurt Kemp, the Braves' director of player development. "To come back to baseball now would be difficult. That's something even Michael Jordan couldn't do."

- BILL BALLEW

STAR SEARCH



ATLANTA BRAVES

Defending NL batting champ Chipper Jones was running third in voting at third base but had a chance at his seventh All-Star Game selection.

CHIPPER JONES and **Brian McCann** had legitimate shots at making the NL All-Star team for the 80th All-Star Game scheduled July 14 in St. Louis. At press time, Chipper was third in fan voting for the starting assignment at third base, which he won last year. He's seeking his seventh All-Star berth. McCann, looking to go to his fourth straight All-Star Game, was running second in voting.

The Braves also have hopes of seeing two pitchers, **Derek Lowe** and **Jair Jurrjens**, named to the NL staff by Philadelphia manager **Charlie Manuel**.

"Every player who plays in the big leagues wants to play in the All-Star Game at least once and win a ring," said Jurrjens, in his second full major league season. "If I do that this year, it would be awesome."

"JJ deserves to be on that team," said McCann. "He deserves a little more respect than he's been getting. He's in the class of these great young pitchers coming up. He's showing why he's one of the top pitchers in baseball."

"It would be a great honor, but no one in here is pitching to try to make an All-Star team," said Lowe. "Catching the Phillies and the Mets is more important than pitching in St. Louis."

COMING 'N' GOING

The Braves made several significant roster changes in the first week of June, led by the decision to release 43-year-old lefthander **Tom Glavine**. The 305-game winner (244 as a Brave), two-time Cy Young Award winner, and MVP of the 1995 World Series was attempting to fight his way back from elbow and shoulder surgery last Aug. 21, but the Braves decided they would be better served with highly-regarded rookie **Tommy Hanson** in the fifth slot of the starting rotation.

Glavine was released June 3, and later that day, general manager Frank Wren completed a trade with Pittsburgh to acquire centerfielder **Nate McLouth** in exchange for righthander **Charlie Morton**, speedy outfield prospect **Gorkys Hernandez** and minor league lefthander **Jeff Locke**. The previous day, struggling rookie **Jordan Schafer** was optioned to Gwinnett, creating the need for a centerfielder. The spot was temporarily filled by **Gregor Blanco**, who was recalled from Gwinnett June 2.

On June 3, the Braves also placed **Jorge Campillo** on the disabled list (shoulder) for the second time this year, and outfielder **Brian Barton**, acquired from St. Louis for **Blaine Boyer**, was called up from Gwinnett, though he was optioned back the next day when McLouth joined the club.

Hanson was officially called up June 7 to make his first career start, and **Casey Kotchman** was disabled (retroactive to June 1) due to a contusion on his shin and strained calf from being hit by a pitch May 31. He was assigned to Gwinnett June 13 for rehab.

In other June moves, **Jo-Jo Reyes** was activated from the DL (hamstring) and assigned to Gwinnett June 9, and on June 11, **Greg Norton** was disabled (hamstring), and first baseman **Barbaro Canizares** was called up from Gwinnett.

Omar Infante was placed on the DL May 21, the result of a fractured left hand that resulted from being hit by a pitch from Colorado's **Manuel Corpas**. The break was in the same place as one 16 months ago when Infante was hit in winter ball, delaying his start to the 2008 season. Shortstop **Diory Hernandez** was called up to replace him on the roster. That same day, Reyes was placed on the DL, and rookie righthander **Kris Medlen** was called up from Gwinnett to make his first major league start.

On May 22, **James Parr** was optioned to Gwinnett, and **Manny Acosta** was called up from Triple A. **Buddy Carlyle** was disabled May 26 (diabetes), and Campillo was activated to replace him in the bullpen.

NO HITS? NO PROB!

Seven outs away from the humiliation of having a no-hitter thrown against them by a winless rookie, the Braves rebounded from a 5-0 deficit to beat the Cubs, 6-5, in 12 innings June 2 at Turner Field. **Chipper Jones'** two-out single in the seventh was the first hit against **Randy Wells**, and Chipper's RBI single in the 12th drove in **Yunel Escobar** to end the walk-off victory. The biggest hit of the night, however, was **Jeff Francoeur**'s two-out, two-run home run in the ninth inning that tied the game, 5-5. It was Francoeur's first home run since May 1.

SHORT HOPS

- The May 17 game against Arizona that was postponed due to rain in Atlanta has been rescheduled for Monday, Aug.

17 at 4 p.m. The game will air on FOX Sports South. Fans can use their original May 17 ticket for entrance. The game against the Cubs that was rained out June 4 was re-scheduled to be played June 22 at Turner Field.

- **Chipper Jones** left the June 6 game in the fifth inning when he became dizzy running out a groundball. He was evaluated and no problem was found. The next day, he returned to the lineup and had two home runs and five RBIs in an 8-7 victory against Milwaukee. It was the 30th multi-homer game of his career and the 16th time he's had a career-high five RBIs.

- The Braves signed lefthander **John Halama**, a 37-year-old veteran of 262 major league games (119 starts) to a minor league contract. Halama, who last pitched in the majors in 2006 with Baltimore, was 8-1 with a 2.05 ERA with the independent Southern Maryland Blue Crabs. His career record in the majors is 56-48 with a 4.65 ERA.

- **Jon Huber**, a 27-year-old right-handed reliever with 25 games of big league experience with Seattle in 2006-07 (2-1, 2.57), was signed to a minor league contract and assigned to Gwinnett. He was 1-0 with a 3.63 ERA with the independent Lancaster Barnstormers.

- **Chipper Jones** suffered a sprained right big toe May 21and played sparingly against left-handed pitching for several days until he recovered. He tried to play May 27 with **Randy Johnson** pitching for the Giants and had the first four-strikeout game of his career.

- **Yunel Escobar** missed six straight games in late May due to a strained right hip flexor. He celebrated his return with a three-run homer in the third inning of a 10-6 win against Arizona.

- **Matt Diaz** made his first career big league start in center field May 30.

- **Chipper Jones** was voted the 10th best player in the majors today, and **Brian McCann** was voted 50th by a panel of 100 Hall of Famers, award winners and baseball personalities assembled by Sporting News.

FRANK WREN
GENERAL MANAGER

MCLOUTH REALLY HELPS GIVE OUR LINEUP A BOOST

WE KNEW OUR OFFENSE would be our biggest challenge, but we just didn't know it was going to be this challenging. It's been the most difficult thing to deal with.

We think adding Nate McLouth is a big improvement, but we still have two or three guys who are pressing and not performing to their normal levels. That's making it difficult to score runs. And it's like anything else in baseball, when guys are struggling, the big situations have a way of "finding" them.

As far as anything else (trades) that might be out there, we're continuing to monitor to see if there's anything that will work for us. But right now, there doesn't appear to be.

The big reason we were able to get McLouth is we spent so much time a year ago talking with the Pirates about Jason Bay. Because of that, both organizations had a good understanding of each other and the players it would take to make a deal.

So in May, when we started to make calls to see what was available, we had a couple of discussions with them, and they made it pretty clear that if we were interested in McLouth, it would be a big deal from their perspective. We said we were willing to explore it, because we liked him enough, so they got back to us with some names (players Pittsburgh would accept). We then spent two or three days trying to get those names aligned the way we wanted them.

Nate is coming off an All-Star year and a Gold Glove, and he has the combination of speed and power we've been looking for in the outfield. If we could get him, it would be an added bonus that he's signed for another three and a half years. That certainly made him even more appealing. And that's not to mention the quality person and makeup he brings.

> "THE BIG REASON WE WERE ABLE TO GET MCLOUTH IS WE SPENT SO MUCH TIME A YEAR AGO TALKING WITH THE PIRATES ABOUT JASON BAY."

We still think some of our kids are going to be a big part of this in the next couple of years, and we look to Jordan Schafer to get righted and get back to give us some of the offense and speed and athleticism we're trying to build.

With Jordan, it just got to the point where he was pressing too much. I told him we still think the world of him and expect him to be a big part of the club in the future. He's not the first young guy to go back out to get settled. I didn't want him to think the McLouth deal was a reflection of his being sent out. It was totally unrelated, and this gives him time to get ready. We look forward to having them both in our outfield.

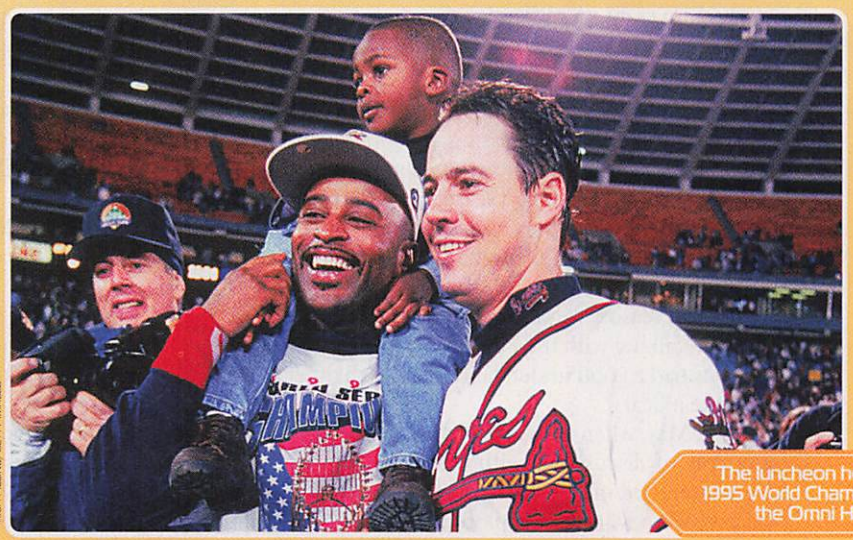
Casey Kotchman is doing very well at this time. He stayed back from going to Baltimore and will work out at Gwinnett and play a couple of games there and hopefully join the team in Cincinnati. This is a guy who was hitting near .300 and driving in runs. Missing him is one of the things that hurt us.

Of all the things that have hurt us, probably the biggest loss was Omar Infante. He's about to get his hard cast off (left hand) and get a softer cast. Hopefully, we'll get him back around the All-Star break.

Tim Hudson is progressing well and is throwing hard bullpens. He's still on track to get back in August, but we'll just have to wait to see when he's game ready.

We brought up Barbaro Canizares for two reasons, to give us another bat and also to give us someone who can DH with interleague games coming up in American League cities. And what really prompted it is Martin Prado is a warrior who's been playing with a sore groin and could barely move at times. We didn't want to put him in a position where it could get worse, so this helps us protect him, and at the same time, Canizares can swing the bat great.

MOVING MADDUX



RICH PILLING/GETTY IMAGES

The luncheon honoring Greg Maddux (seen here celebrating the 1995 World Championship with Dwight Smith) has been moved to the Omni Hotel at CNN Center to accommodate more fans.

IN ORDER to accommodate the large demand for tickets to the induction of **Greg Maddux** into the Braves Hall of Fame, the July 17 luncheon in his honor has been moved to the Omni Hotel at CNN Center. Call (404) 614-2310 for information about tickets that are $120 each. The event previously was scheduled for Turner Field's 755 Club.

Maddux will again be honored that evening before the 7:30 game against the Mets when his uniform No. 31 is officially retired. Tickets are available at braves.com/tickets and at the Turner Field ticket office, as well as by calling Ticketmaster at 1-800-745-3000 or visiting a Ticketmaster outlet.

SERIOUSLY CLOSE

Fans who like to watch the Braves from as close as possible are going to love this opportunity. Tickets are now available to watch batting practice on the field!

Fans who purchase a ticket to the Braves Batting Practice Experience - in addition to their game ticket - will have access to an exclusive area of the field directly behind the batting cage to watch batting practice up close and personal.

Guests will see approximately 30-45 minutes of Braves batting practice and about 10-15 minutes of visitors batting practice. Tickets are $50 and are limited to 75 people per session. Braves season ticket holders can purchase tickets for $40, and groups of 20 or more receive a $10 discount per ticket. Braves Batting Practice Experience tickets are available in advance at braves.com/battingpractice up to one hour before BP begins. This feature is not available on Sundays.

FREE TUNES!

The Braves will host a free post-game concert presented by Coca-Cola on Saturday, July 18, with multi-platinum recording artists The All American Rejects following the 4 p.m. game against the Mets. The concert will start approximately 20 minutes after the final out.

Fans interested in attending the concert can purchase game tickets at the Turner Field ticket office or go to braves.com/tickets, as well as at all TicketMaster locations or by calling TicketMaster at 1-800-745-3000.

REPORT CARD

The Braves received the coveted A+ Award in recognition of the long-standing partnership the team has with D.H. Stanton Elementary. The A+ Awards celebrate achievement and excellence in educational partnerships between Atlanta Public Schools and metro Atlanta businesses and organizations. The award encourages the pursuit of excellence in education while focusing public attention on educational achievements in the Atlanta Public Schools and successful partnerships between schools and the business community. The A+ Awards are sponsored by Atlanta Partners for Education, a joint venture between Atlanta Public Schools and the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce.

The Braves joined Stanton Elementary for a long-term partnership in 2005 that includes tutoring, mentoring, career development activities, esteem building projects, educational and motivational school assemblies. The Braves Tomahawk Tutors program consists of front office employees who spend time each week at Stanton, mentoring and tutoring fifth-grade students.

SHOPAHOLICS

Mike Gonzalez, **Jordan Schafer** and **Greg Norton** greeted fans and assisted shoppers May 22, at Publix in Buckhead when the Braves and Publix launched the "Shop with the Braves" summer tour. Additional "Shop with the Braves" dates scheduled this summer include: July 2, July 31, Aug. 22 and Sept. 5. Participating Braves and Publix locations will be announced prior to each date. Among other things, players will bag groceries, assist in the deli, help prepare Publix samples, and sign autographs at several metro Atlanta Publix stores.

HEROES FOR HUNGER

The Braves and 11Alive have teamed with the Atlanta Community Food Bank to launch the Heroes for Hunger campaign. Throughout June, fans can donate non-perishable food items at any Braves game and receive a special ticket coupon offer for upcoming games. Drop off locations

include Guest Relations at aisle 146, Community Clubhouse in Fan Plaza and the 755 Club Lobby entrance. **Derek Lowe** also joined the campaign, signing autographs in exchange for donations to the Food Bank June 10 in Monument Grove.

STAR POWER

The Braves have three "everyday All-Stars" finalists - people who have gone above and beyond to serve the community - competing for the opportunity to attend the All-Star Game in St. Louis July 14 as part of the All-Stars Among us campaign presented by People Magazine and Major League Baseball. Online voting ended June 24. The Braves finalists are:

- **Olivia Buckmon** of Stone Mountain, Ga., established a scholarship in her child's name after her daughter died four years ago. Her efforts have helped more than 30 high school students without mothers go to college.
- At the age of 15, **Haley Kilpatrick** of Atlanta founded her own nonprofit organization, Girl Talk. A student-to-student mentoring program, Girl Talk now reaches 30,000 girls in 27 states.
- **Ryan Housley** of Tyrone, Ga., was inspired by conversations with his younger brother **Evan**, who was deployed in Iraq, and started HeroBox to support soldiers in combat. The nonprofit organization supplies packages customized to a soldier's specific needs.

BALLS & STRIKES

- The Braves and the Baseball Tomorrow Fund teamed to collect new and gently used baseball and softball equipment to benefit the Junior Braves/RBI Youth Baseball League June 6-7. Fans who donated received an autographed Braves item. Additionally, the Baseball Tomorrow Fund, a joint initiative of Major League Baseball and the Major League Baseball Players Association, awarded a $5,000 grant to the Junior Braves/RBI Youth Baseball League

- Every time a Braves pitcher registers a strikeout at Turner Field, a pyrotechnic display is triggered on the Gas South sign in right field. To celebrate the "Bring the Heat" strikeout sponsorship, Gas South is giving away VIP packages. Visit gas-south.com/vip.

I'M EXCITED THAT WE ARE HONORING GREG MADDUX

EVERY MANAGER should be so blessed to have a professional player like Greg Maddux during his career. He was not only a talented, superstar, Hall of Fame athlete, but he was a team guy first. Before anything else, Greg was a team guy. I've got the utmost respect and praise for him.

He's unlike any other player I've been associated with. He goes right up there at the top of the list. He was one of the brightest, most intelligent players I've ever managed. He was a fierce competitor, too.

I'll never forget at his retirement press conference in Las Vegas this past off-season, a reporter asked him about what he had learned from his teammates and what it was like to pitch in a rotation with Tom Glavine and John Smoltz. Greg answered that Tommy taught him how to pitch with pain. And he did. People didn't always know it, but Greg pitched with all kinds of aches and pains.

I'm excited to see him inducted in the Braves Hall of Fame. And he'll have his number retired, too, which is a huge honor. He certainly deserves it. His friends, John Smoltz and Tom Glavine, will be there, too, someday, and it will really be something to see them honored for all they accomplished here.

There's no way I could pinpoint a favorite pitching performance from Greg. There were so many, and almost all were spectacular. But I'm not surprised to know that he can remember his favorite and least favorite performances. He was like an encyclopedia, and that's why he was so good. He'd remember everything. Every tendency a guy had, he'd store that to use later in the game, or even later in the season. He really was a remarkable pitcher.

> "HE (MADDUX) WAS LIKE AN ENCYCLOPEDIA, AND THAT'S WHY HE WAS SO GOOD. HE'D REMEMBER EVERYTHING."

We would love to tap into his knowledge for our young pitchers. I've asked him to join us at spring training next season as a guest instructor, and he's said, "If I can, I will." I know he'd have a lot to teach our pitchers.

We were thrilled to get Nate McLouth from Pittsburgh. He's already made an impact. He's a straight-up baseball player. He's not a superstar, but he is a solid player in every aspect of the game. He's solid defensively, stealing bases, and has power and can hit. I think he has leadership qualities, too. He's got great makeup and is a wonderful kid. He's another guy who wants to be at the ballpark every day to help us win. You can't ask for more than that.

Once we finally started getting our injured guys healthy, especially Brian McCann and Chipper Jones, we started to see things fall into place. It's awfully hard to go out there and play hard, night after night, and stay 100 percent healthy.

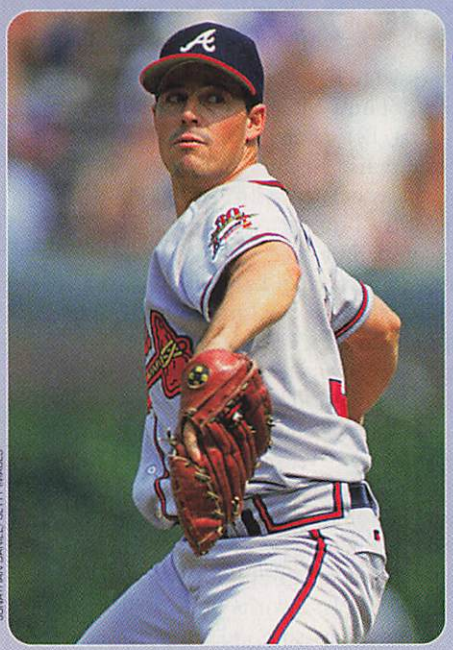
Our starting rotation has been healthy, though they haven't always had the runs to back them. The bullpen has really been good. Eric O'Flaherty is one of the guys who has meant so much to our bullpen. He's really pitched well. He's got the stuff to be a bullpen guy for a long time.

Probably the biggest loss of the season so far was Omar Infante (broken hand). He was the perfect guy. He could do everything but catch. We lost him for over two months last year, and now he's out for over two months again. He had surgery to put a plate in his hand. Then after it heals, they'll go in and take the plate out. It is healing, and healing well, but once he's finished with all that, he'll have to rehab.

We're looking forward to Tim Hudson coming back from Tommy John surgery. He's feeling good, and if you had a chance to watch his bullpen sessions, you'd really be excited.

I believe we'll be in the thick of the race as the season goes on. No one has taken off in the division. The Phillies were hot, but no one is running away. As we head into the All-Star break, I have every belief in our team.

PLAYING PEPPER GREG MADDUX



JONATHAN DANIEL, GETTY IMAGES

Maddux says the baseball accomplishment he's most proud of is being part of the Braves' World Series championship in 1995.

ON JULY 17, Greg Maddux will be inducted into the Braves Hall of Fame during a luncheon at the Omni Hotel at CNN Center. Prior to that evening's game (7:30 vs. Mets), the Braves will make Maddux just the sixth player in franchise history to have his uniform number retired. In 11 seasons with the Braves (1993-2003), Maddux won 194 games and three of his four consecutive Cy Young Awards (1993-95). He owns club records for season ERA (1.54 in 1994), career ERA (2.63) and career winning percentage (.688, 194-88).

INTERVIEW BY
PATTY RASMUSSEN

CHOPTALK: How did you originally get uniform No. 31? Did you ever have another number before 31?

GREG MADDUX: It was hanging in my locker when I came up as a rookie (1986). I was a 20-year-old kid walking down the steps at Wrigley and saw that jersey hanging in the locker. I was lucky enough to have it most of my career, except for San Diego (No. 30 in 2007-08) and Los Angeles (No. 36 in 2006, '08).

CT: If you had it to do all over again, would you do anything in your career differently?

MADDUX: Hmmm. There are probably a couple of pitches I wouldn't throw!

CT: Which ones?

MADDUX: There was a fastball to Will Clark that wasn't very good. He hit it in the (outfield) basket (at Wrigley Field) and got a grand slam. There was a pitch to Doug Bell in the Astrodome during a tight game that I would like to have back. And there were a couple of balls that I tossed that I probably should have just let the guy take the base. But overall, I think I was pretty fortunate. I got to pitch in Chicago two times in my career (1986-92, 2004-06). I spent 11 years pitching in Atlanta (1993-2003), and we won most of those years, and I got to finish my career on the West Coast. It was weird... I loved Chicago and never wanted to leave when I was there, but when I got to Atlanta, I found out that maybe the grass was greener on the other side. Then playing in San Diego and L.A., I was close to our home in Las Vegas, so we had a home close to our home. It was a great place, almost like a vacation. And don't underestimate the weather. Atlanta had rain, heat and humidity. It was cold in Chicago during the first two months of the season and usually the last month. But in Southern California, almost every day it was 70 degrees and beautiful. I had very little adversity in my career. I was lucky to play where I wanted to play and for as long as I played.

> "YOU KNOW WHAT? GOOD CONTROL MAKES YOU SMART. WHEN YOU'RE LOCATION IS GOOD, IT MAKES YOU SMART."

CT: It's just your first year out of the game, but do you have any interest in getting back in baseball in any capacity someday? Managing? Coaching? Front office?

MADDUX: I don't know. Maybe in the future, but not right now. I'm enjoying my children, enjoying watching the second half of their lives since I missed most of the first half. I enjoy watching my son, Chase (12), play baseball, coaching a little bit - I don't coach very much. And I like seeing my daughter, Paige (15), do the things she does, cheering and picking out prom dresses. She'll be driving soon, so watch out Las Vegas!

CT: What about your career are you most proud of?

MADDUX: I'm most proud of winning the World Series in 1995 and having 20 great years in baseball. People don't realize what a great game baseball is. Something different happens every night. So much goes into those nine innings that people don't see - whether it's the managers making moves, a pitch, a hit, a foul ball, a call by an umpire. In any given game, something will happen that you probably will never see again. There's always the thinking involved with it. Maybe there's a situation where everyone, including the fans, know the pitcher should throw a curveball, but the pitcher doesn't throw it. Everyone's wondering why, but they don't know that he's got a blister, or he knows his curveball wasn't called for a strike two pitches before, or whatever. And that pitch was just one of 200 or so pitches that night. That's the beauty of the game. And you know what? It's the same game, even when I'm watching 12-year-olds playing. It's exactly the same game. Sometimes you see the same mistakes that the 30-year-olds make. The only difference is that one game is played at incredible speed! Everything else - the emotions, the thinking, the failures and success - are the same.

CT: How difficult was it to decide to retire, and when did you actually make that decision? How much consideration did you give to playing again this year?

MADDUX: It wasn't a difficult decision

at all, because it was time. Anyone who could feel my legs would know it was time! I ran out of gas and still managed to play for two more years. I didn't want to stay in the game and embarrass myself. I have too much respect for the game to not play it at a high level, and I knew I wasn't capable of that. I didn't want to use my past performance to hang on. I'd seen players that played longer than they should have, and I didn't want to do that.

CT: How old were you when you lived in Spain? Is that where you were when you started to play baseball?

MADDUX: The first team I ever played on was in (Madrid) Spain. My father was in the Air Force, and we were stationed there. He was the coach. I was six at the time, and because my dad was the coach, I got to pitch and play shortstop.

CT: Were you any good?

MADDUX: I don't even know. All I remember was that the shirts were green! We moved to Vegas next. My dad got stationed there. I played baseball when we lived on base, and then he retired and started dealing poker, and I played baseball off base. I was a normal kid. I was playing JV basketball, and our last game was on a Friday, and one of my buddies said, "Baseball tryouts are on Monday. Want to go out for baseball?" So, I did, and I realized that I threw harder than most of the other guys. When I was a sophomore, I made the JV team. My brother, Mike, got drafted by the Reds and was offered a college baseball scholarship. My dad said I threw harder than my brother had at the same age, and that's when I thought maybe I could get a baseball scholarship. I had a great coach at the time - Ralph "Rusty" Medar - who held Sunday workouts. So, when I was 16 years old, I would pitch to guys from the University of Nevada Las Vegas and other guys, like Marty Barrett who was in Triple A in the Red Sox organization at the time. I started to understand how to pitch - that you couldn't just throw hard. It was a good learning experience for me. I learned that location was more important than velocity. I didn't understand how great a lesson that was for me until I got to the minor leagues and saw guys doing all sorts of things to try to make a baseball move.

CT: Do you think the fact that you were a location pitcher rather than a power pitcher had an impact on the longevity of your career?

MADDUX: I think more than anything it was because I was mechanically very sound when I signed. I never had a coach at any level try to change my mechanics. I never worried about my stride or my release point. The only thing I ever really worked on was my alignment. How you pitch every time out, your mechanics, plays a big role in staying healthy.

CT: What's a typical day like for you now?

MADDUX: I get up in the morning and take the kids to school, around 7:30. Then I go play golf. I'll have lunch with my wife, Kathy, or maybe my buddies. I pick up the kids around 3:30, and then it's time for their activities.

> "IT'S SPECIAL TO HAVE YOUR NUMBER RETIRED WITH ONE TEAM, LET ALONE TWO TEAMS."

CT: How many days a week do you golf? Has your game improved since you retired? What's your handicap?

MADDUX: I golf three or four days a week. Our weekends are usually taken up with tournaments or kids activities. I don't think my game has improved that much. I have a 6 handicap right now. Golf is a hard game. It's easy to get okay at it, but hard to get good at it.

CT: How do you want to be remembered as a pitcher?

MADDUX: I don't really think about that. I just remember watching guys as I was coming up. I watched Orel Hershiser, Mario Soto, Dwight Gooden, Nolan Ryan, David Cone... all those guys did things with a baseball that I couldn't do. But they also did things that I could do, and I wanted to learn that. So, if there were things that I've done in my career that make a young guy want to learn something or that helps a young guy,

NY CHAPTER BBWAA

Greg and Kathy Maddux at the Baseball Writers Association of America annual New York Chapter Awards dinner in Manhattan Jan. 25 where he received the William J. Slocum-Jack Lang Award for long and meritorious service.

PLAYING PEPPER

ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Maddux, who lives in Las Vegas, was honored with a night in his honor Feb. 3 during a basketball game at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

that would be great.

CT: You're eighth all-time in wins with 355, second since WWII to Warren Spahn (363), and first over the last 45 years, so you're an automatic Hall of Famer. If you could write the inscription on your Hall of Fame plaque, what would it say?

MADDUX: Honestly, I haven't even thought of that. I will say that the last 10 years of my career, I really enjoyed the game. One thing that I really enjoyed was how great it was to be around these other players and how good they were. Even the guy hitting .240 was good! And I got to watch these guys every night.

CT: Everyone always talks about the unusual acumen you have for the game. Did you have that even as an amateur and in the minors? Where did that come from? Did you pick it up and learn it from others? Did you get it mainly from studying the game? Or is it just something that came natural, sort of like a great musician or artist that is born with a certain knowledge and skills for their craft?

MADDUX: You know what? Good control makes you smart. When you're location is good, it makes you smart. You see pitchers trying to make a pitch, and it's the right pitch for the moment - but they don't locate it, and they end up giving up a hit. People say, "That was wrong." But it wasn't the pitch that was wrong, it was the location. I maybe got too much credit for being smart, when it was really just that I was locating my pitches.

CT: Perhaps that's true, but it's also true that you studied hitters and watched video, right?

MADDUX: I used video, but I tried to use common sense. I didn't want to get too caught up in scouting reports. I needed to trust my stuff and what I saw on the field. Some of the stats they've come up with in scouting reports cause pitchers to put themselves in holes, because they're pitching to the stats.

CT: What's the best game you ever pitched, and why?

MADDUX: There was a game, when I was with the Braves in St. Louis, when I pitched against Mike Morgan (Aug. 20, 1995). The score ended up being 1-0, and I probably threw about 90 pitches (actually 88, 66 for strikes), and two-thirds of the pitches were "right there." It was just one of those games (Maddux faced two batters over the minimum, allowing two hits and no walks in a complete game win). And the most satisfying game was Game 1 of the 1995 World Series when I started against Cleveland (3-2 win, complete game 2-hitter). It was my first crack at a World Series game, and I was lucky enough to get to pitch. And we won, too.

> "I'VE ALWAYS SAID PITCHING IS LOCATING YOUR FASTBALL AND CHANGING SPEEDS."

CT: You've mentioned the '95 World Series a good bit. What about your 300th win (Aug. 7, 2004, an 8-4 decision for the Cubs over the Giants)?

MADDUX: That was a great number, and I know just a few pitchers get to that number (he was the 22nd in history). But for me, it was never about the numbers. When I got the 300th win, we (Cubs) were in the middle of a pennant race. Getting 300 wasn't about the season. The season was about me being one of 25 guys trying to get to the post-season. Post-season games in Chicago are huge. It means a lot to everybody, players included. So getting 300 wins was cool, but I knew I would get that win someday. I would have traded the 300th to get to the post-season (the Cubs missed the wild card by 3 games).

CT: What do you consider your biggest accomplishment in baseball?

MADDUX: The biggest accomplishment was getting there (majors) and making it! I remember getting called up from Triple-A (Iowa in 1986). I started off that season in Double-A (Pittsfield) and worked my way up. Larry Cox called me in and said I was being called up in September. I had a car, and Chico Walker and I drove up to Chicago from Des Moines, Iowa. It was the first time I'd ever been to Wrigley Field. It was something. Probably the second biggest accomplishment was winning the World Series. It was my first time in a World Series, and I'll never forget that last pitch from "Woh-Daddy" (Mark Wohlers), and Marquis Grissom ran in to get under it.

CT: What family members will be with you in Atlanta for your Braves Hall of Fame induction and number retirement?

MADDUX: I'm not sure yet. We had about 20 family members in Chicago (for the Cubs' May 3 number retiring ceremony). We have a lot of friends still in Atlanta, people we still exchange Christmas cards

with and stay in touch with. We really started our life there. Chase was born in Atlanta.

CT: What season did you enjoy the most, and why?

MADDUX: They were all pretty good, but 1993 was very good, personally. It was my first year in Atlanta, the first time I had changed teams, my first big contract. You're never sure what to expect, and when you get a lot of money, you feel you have to justify your signing. I was lucky enough to have things work out, so I didn't have to think too much about that.

CT: What are your feelings about having your number retired by two teams within two and a half months?

MADDUX: It's special to have your number retired with one team, let alone two teams. It's a pretty cool honor, especially since it was two teams that I loved playing for.

CT: How will it feel to have your number hanging in Turner Field with the other retired Braves numbers of Hank Aaron, Warren Spahn, Eddie Mathews, Phil Niekro and Dale Murphy? When you were pitching here, did you ever allow yourself to look at them and think, "I wonder if my number will ever be up there?"

MADDUX: It's pretty cool. I had the chance during my time in Atlanta to see Phil Niekro and Hank Aaron from time to time, when they'd be at the ballpark, and you always saw the high degree of respect they commanded. I always wondered how it was when they played - was it different? You always hear the game is different now. I don't think the game is different - I think the players probably are. But to be in that company, with those guys, is an honor. It's going to mean even more to me when Tom Glavine and John Smoltz are there, too, because we did what we did together. We pushed one another to the next level, and you see them and know how they did it, how they succeeded. I think of that and the good times we had and the stupid things that happened. The times we spent in the clubhouse in (Candlestick Park) in San Francisco because Bobby (Cox) didn't want the pitchers to be sitting out in the cold. It was special.

CT: Warren Spahn said, "Hitting is timing. Pitching is upsetting timing." How would you describe the art of pitching?

MADDUX: I've always said pitching is locating your fastball and changing speeds. You have to figure out - is it time to locate or time to change speeds - and you do that by using the information right in front of you. You look at the count, the hitter, how many outs. The information is available to you to make the decision, but you don't know if you're right until you execute the pitch.

CT: What did you enjoy most about playing baseball? Do you miss it?

MADDUX: I enjoyed winning the most. I liked the games that ended, 1-0, 2-1, 3-2. I enjoyed pitching two more innings than I thought I could go, getting a hit, sliding, making a good defensive play. Thinking about throwing a pitch against a guy on Monday and making that pitch against him two days later, I really liked that!

I'm not really missing it that much, and that's kind of scary! I loved hanging out with the pitchers in the video room a couple of days before a start. I miss tinkering with game plans and executing the game plan a couple days later. It's easy to miss the card games on the plane. I loved the travel. There was always a poker game on the plane. You'd play golf one day on the East Coast, and the next week, you were playing golf on the West Coast. The longer you play, the more you're able to take advantage of the opportunities you're given. I always enjoyed the cities, but I was always ready to play. When you're a young player, you're worried about getting better - how much can I make, how long can I play. Smoltz was really good at making the most of his days. He taught me that you could enjoy more than baseball, but you had to pick your spots.

CT: What do you think of the Braves' pitching staff this year?

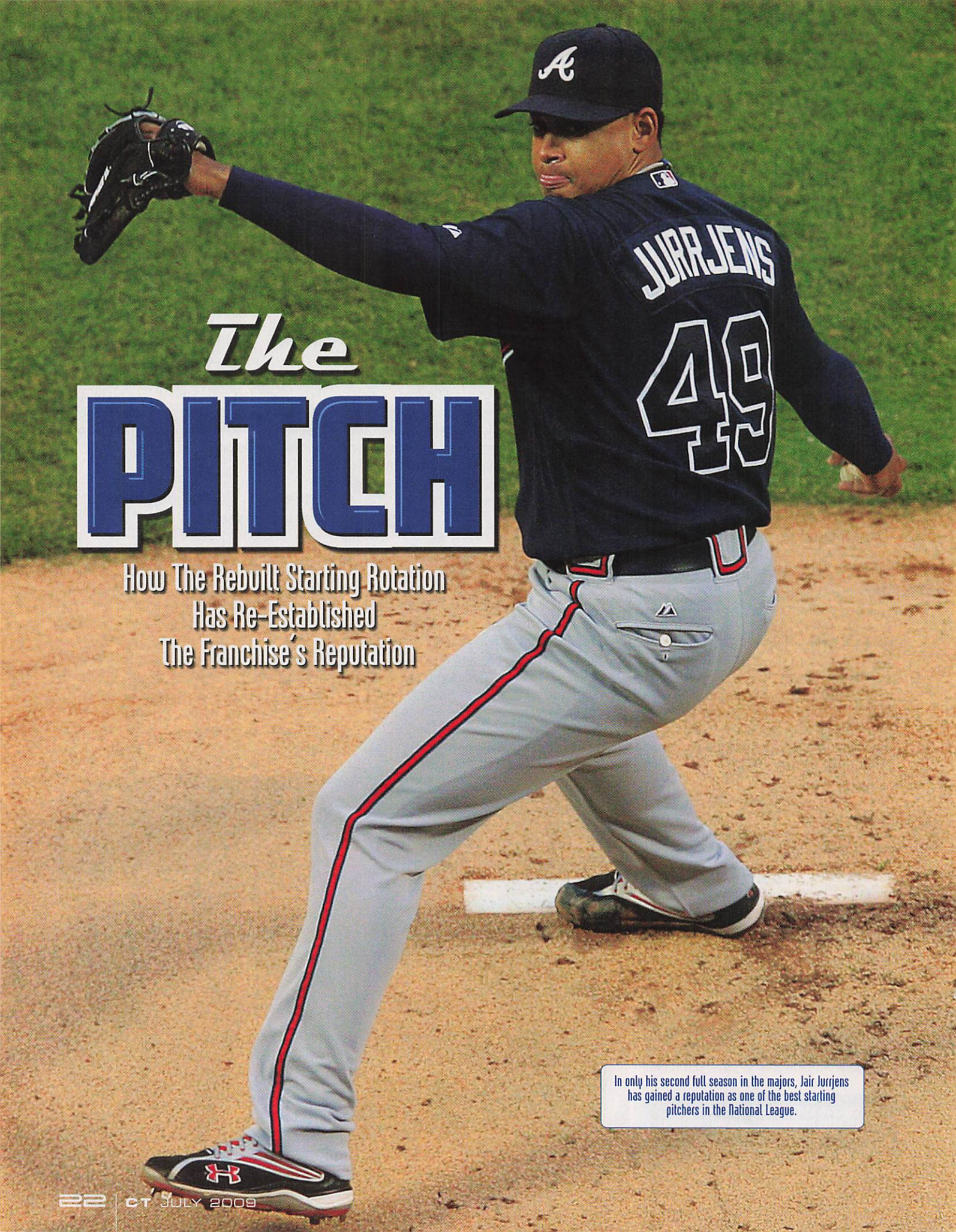
MADDUX: I think they're good. I've watched Derek Lowe pitch a couple of times. He's a guy I really like to watch. He's a good pitcher, and it's not just what he does when he's pitching. It's the preparation I know he puts into it. When I'm watching baseball, it's more about watching certain guys, like Lowe, rather than a team. Jair Jurrjens is a good pitcher. I watched him a couple of times last season, and he's aggressive. Javier Vazquez is pitching well.

ATLANTA BRAVES

Maddux says 1993, his first year with the Braves after leaving the Cubs via free agency, was his most enjoyable season in the majors.

The PITCH

How The Rebuilt Starting Rotation Has Re-Established The Franchise's Reputation



In only his second full season in the majors, Jair Jurrjens has gained a reputation as one of the best starting pitchers in the National League.

BY JON COOPER

THE ATLANTA BRAVES and starting pitching. It used to be that you couldn't think of one without the other.

Fans could turn on the game as late as the fourth inning and be assured of seeing the starter throw at least two or three more quality innings before handing the game over to the bullpen.

The current rotation of Derek Lowe, Jair Jurrjens, Javier Vazquez, Kenshin Kawakami and a highly regarded rookie —Tommy Hanson — is bringing back those days.

"I think it's just a matter of being professionals, coming to the ballpark every day, and whoever is on the mound is the ace for the day," said pitching coach Roger McDowell. "For us to win as a unit, everybody has to pull on the same end of the rope. I think everybody's done very well."

Remember during the off-season, when all the talk was about what the Braves' staff was lacking? How Atlanta had to "settle for" Vazquez after suffering sticker shock at the price of C.C. Sabathia, balking at San Diego's asking price for Jake Peavy, and being jilted by A.J. Burnett? How they desperately "overpaid" for Kenshin Kawakami and then Derek Lowe?

So, how do you like them now?

As the All-Star break approached, Atlanta's rotation ranked in the top 10 in the majors in earned run average, opposing batting average, WHIP (walks and hits per innings pitched), quality starts, strikeouts, fewest walks, fewest earned runs, fewest hits, fewest home runs, walks-to-strikeouts ratio and strikeouts per nine innings.

No other team in the NL East can boast those accomplishments. And they've done it without a pitch from Tim Hudson, who is still rehabbing his elbow, and with the best that Triple-A Gwinnett could offer in the fifth spot.

"I think they've been by far the biggest strength of this team," said Brian McCann of the Braves' starters. "They've kept us in every ballgame. I can't say enough about how awesome they've been. Everybody brings something different to the table, and they all have success. It's fun catching these guys."

The pitchers in the rotation are having fun, too, but they won't tout their success. For them, it's simply a matter of doing their jobs with the efficiency they expect. Each of the top three starters had made every regular start through the season's first two months, and each averaged at least six innings per outing. Kawakami missed just one start in early May due to a tired shoulder.

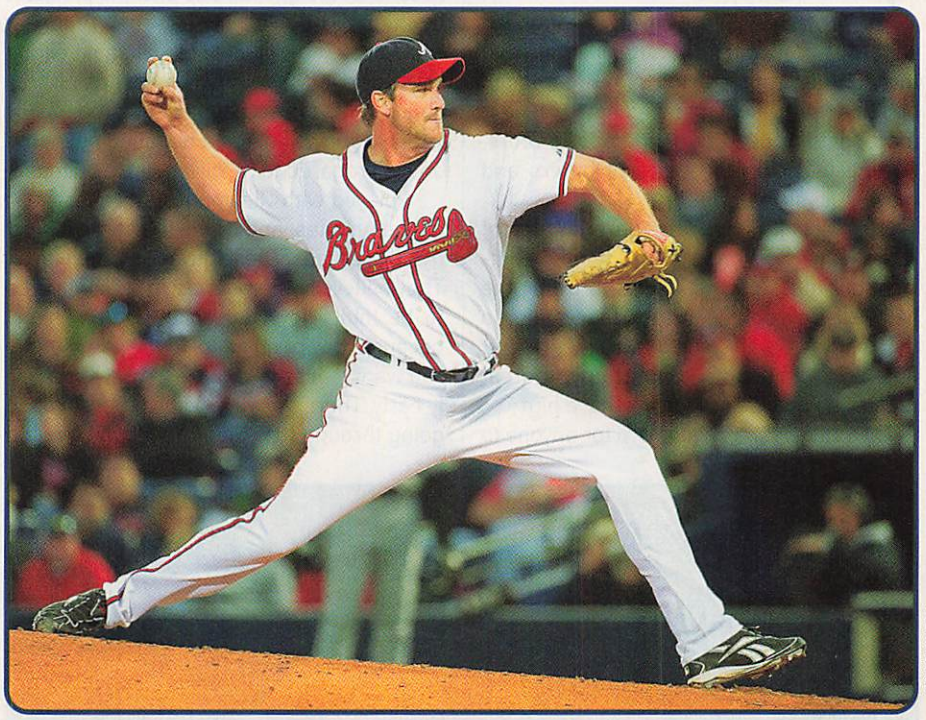
"You look at people's track records, as far as what guys have been able to do over their careers," said Lowe, who tied for the NL lead in May with four wins (fourth in the majors) and is among league leaders in starts, wins and innings. "Kenshin had great success over in Japan. Probably it's still going to take him a little bit of time to get to know the league. He hasn't faced a lot of guys. JJ's (Jair Jurrjens) one of the best in the game. So, this is kind of what we all expected. I think the biggest thing is, we're able to go six, seven innings pretty much every night and keep the team in the game.

"The main thing for us is just staying healthy. Last year, we had a lot of injuries, and this year we've stayed healthy," added Jurrjens, who has been among NL leaders in ERA all season, only allowing more than three earned runs twice in his first 13 starts.

While there is no stated competition between the starters, there is the matter of pride, regardless of who is toeing the rubber on a given night.

"Our rotation takes pride in going out every five days," said Lowe. "We work extremely hard in between starts to give this team a chance to win. If the team's on a good winning streak, you don't want to be the guy to go out and stop the streak. There's nothing wrong with having competition within your rotation to try to outdo each other."

"Everybody has a job to do," said Vazquez, who is among NL leaders in innings and strikeouts and who, despite the reputation as a flyball pitcher, is fifth in the majors since 2007 with a better than 9.0 strikeouts-per-nine innings ratio. "We're all accountable for what we do on the mound, and it's always when one guy is doing good, you want to follow that. Most of the guys are pitching good, so we're just trying to follow each other."



ATLANTA BRAVES

Rotation ace Derek Lowe led the Braves' staff with seven wins at press time, the second-highest total in the National League, and he also ranked sixth in innings pitched.

One critical area where the Braves excel as a unit has been in limiting the home run ball. Last year's Braves gave up nearly a home run a game (156 total), but this year's staff is third in the majors, surrendering only one every two games. They're led by sinkerballer Lowe, whose .26 homers allowed per nine innings is fifth in the majors, and Jurrjens, who had allowed only 15 since the start of 2008, third-fewest in the National League behind only San Francisco's Tim Lincecum and Colorado's Ubaldo Jimenez.

The group has proven they know how to

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

JIM MCISAAC/GETTY IMAGES

win. Kawakami was the only starter with a sub-.500 record, but he has shown flashes of brilliance, such as his eight-inning masterpiece May 22, when he shut out Toronto on only three hits, while striking out seven and going pitch for pitch with Roy Halladay. His 3-6 record also was misleading, because the Braves managed fewer than two runs a game for him, the lowest run-support in the majors.

"So far, I feel like I haven't responded well with my pitching," Kawakami said through his translator. "I think I can pitch better. I feel like I'm blending in a little more, getting used to things a little more. Getting used to tendencies of hitters and maybe the strike zone."

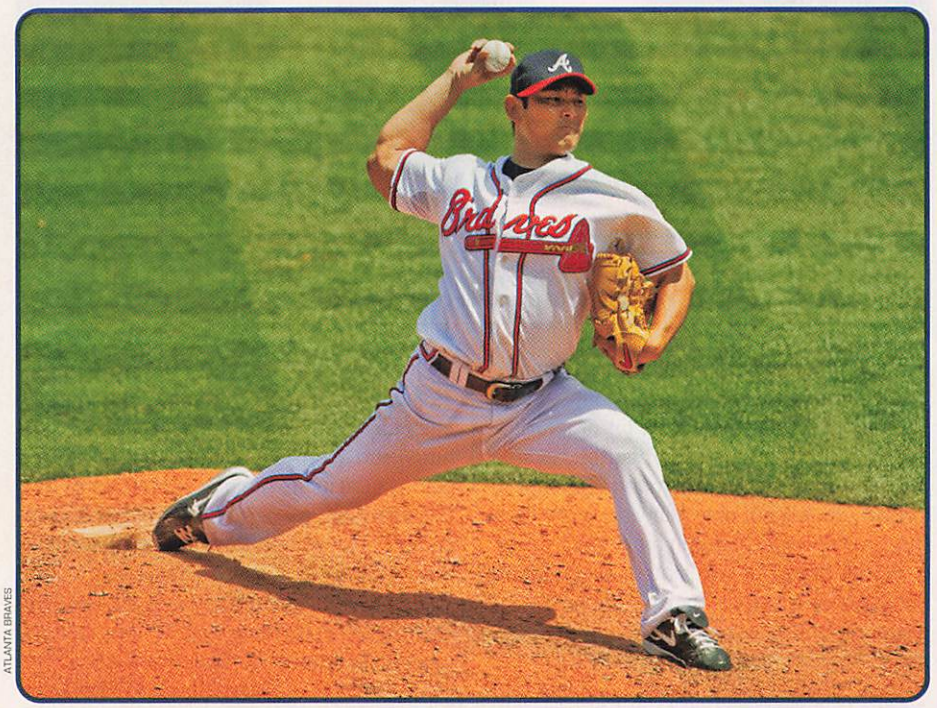
"He's doing a good job," Vazquez said of Kawakami. "He's had a couple of rough outings, but that's part of it. He's throwing the ball well. He's getting to know the league, so that's always something that you learn. But he's doing well. He's a great guy, a great teammate and we're happy to have him."

The fifth spot has been hard for anyone to hold, though it could now be the property of Hanson. Jo-Jo Reyes struggled, then strained his right hamstring, and rookie Kris Medlen was roughed up in his first major league start but improved in each of his next two. Both were considered stopgaps until Tom Glavine came back. When Glavine was released, however, the job was handed to Hanson, considered the majors' second-best right-handed pitching prospect by the trade publication Baseball America. Hanson blew away the International League with Gwinnett, and showed flashes of brilliance in his major league debut June 7.

> We're all accountable for what we do on the mound, and it's always when one guy is doing good, you want to follow that. Most of the guys are pitching good, so we're just trying to follow each other.
>
> –Javier Vazquez

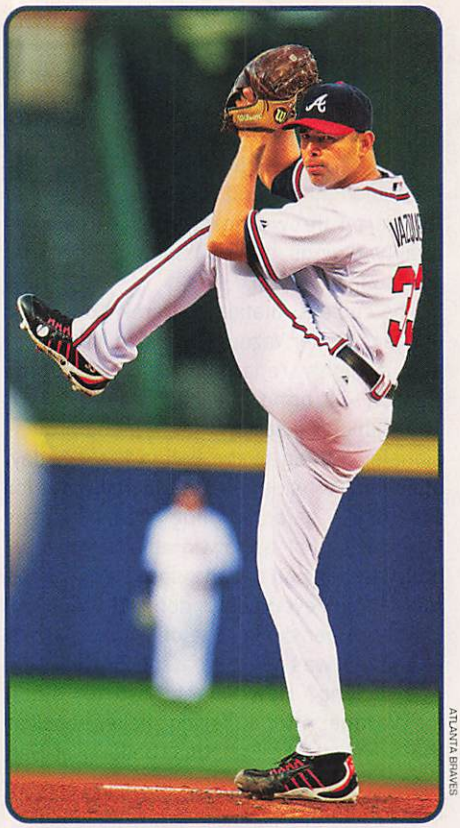
Lowe knows all about handling phenoms and is prepared to help Hanson, as needed.

"I played with Clayton Kershaw last year in Los Angeles, and it was the same type of hype," he said. "These guys are just special. They believe in themselves. They don't need to be told, 'Hey, just do the same thing,' because they're going to do the same thing. You want to let them come to you, especially early. There's always going to be so much going through their mind. You don't want to overpower them with too much information, but as the season goes on, I imagine there will be more talk."



ATLANTA BRAVES

In spite of receiving the worst run support in the majors, Kenshin Kawakami has shown flashes of brilliance, such as eight innings of 3-hit ball against Toronto May 22.



ATLANTA BRAVES

At press time, Javier Vazquez ranked first in the league in strikeouts with 105, two more than San Francisco's Tim Lincecum, last year's Cy Young winner.

Then there's Hudson, who believes he'll be ready to start making rehab starts in August and who could give the team the effect of picking up an impact player at the trade deadline without making a trade.

"That's the plan," said Hudson, who hopes to improve on his 54-38 record with Atlanta. "It's just going to be a tough decision for somebody to make. Hopefully, everybody's going to be pitching well, and I come back healthy. I've said all along, I just want to come back and help us in whatever capacity the team needs me in, whether that be starting or out of the 'pen. I'm happy either way."

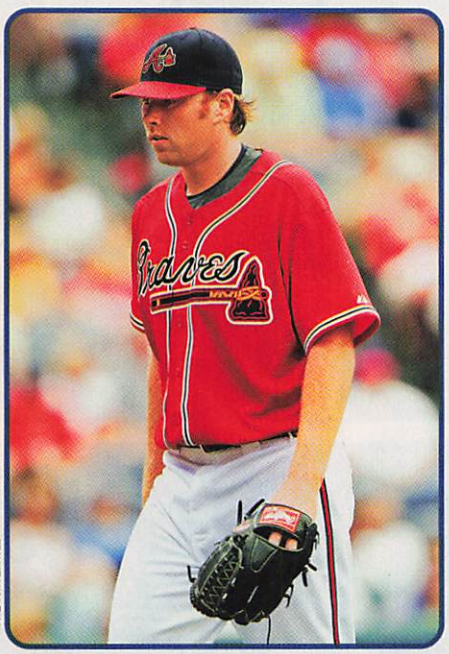
A healthy Hudson can add another level to the already sky-high psyche surrounding the starting rotation. The rest of the team has picked up on the vibe, and it's allowing the Braves to overcome injuries that has wreaked havoc on the lineup and has them believing that anything is possible. Take, the 6-5, 12-inning win over the Cubs on June 3, when the Braves came back from a five-run hole. According to Elias Sports Bureau, it's the first such win against the Cubs since July 27, 1922,

and was Atlanta's first win in its last 24 tries when trailing after eight innings. Chipper Jones credits the starting rotation for giving the team a chance to create such heroics.

"It's extremely comforting knowing that we're going to be in the game, for the most part, throughout our whole rotation," said Jones. "Last year, we couldn't get enough quality outs at the beginning of games, we wore out our bullpen, we were out of games really early. This year, that hasn't been the case. D-Lowe, JJ, Vazquez, Kawakami and Medlen, at this point, have done a good job of keeping us in ballgames. The more you feel like you're in the game, the more times you'll have the opportunity to come back late."

Thanks to the rotation, the Braves have hung around within striking distance in the NL East and believe they have a good shot at winning the division or at least getting back to the post-season.

"It's getting to be exciting," said Jurrjens. "Especially when Derek and Vazquez go out there, especially for me to have a chance to see two veterans, one before me and one after me. It's a really awesome thing, especially with Derek, working on his pitch count and just getting groundballs, and Javy Vazquez just striking people out like he's playing Little League. It's just awesome. It's a blast for me to just sit and watch him pitch."



ATLANTA BRAVES

In his major league debut June 7 against Milwaukee, Tommy Hanson struck out the side in the second inning and retired the first 10 batters he faced before getting roughed up.

ERIC O'FLAHERTY

I WAS NEARLY A BRAVE RIGHT OUT OF SCHOOL

I GREW UP in eastern Washington - Walla Walla - and got drafted out of high school by the Seattle Mariners. I spent about six years in that organization, a couple of those years in the majors. In the off-season, I got put on waivers and wound up over here.

What's funny is the Braves are the team I wanted to draft me. They were the first team to talk to me. The scout was named Jay Harrison. He was the first guy who talked to me and told me I had a chance in pro ball. He and another scout came to my house and played this video about becoming a champion. It had Chipper Jones on it, all the guys, and it gets you fired up. After that, I knew I wanted to play for these guys.

Draft day came and I was on the phone with the Braves scout. He was asking me, "Will you take this much for our next pick?" I said, "Yeah, I'll do that." I was pretty excited and got a beep on my phone and it was the Mariners telling me they had just drafted me!

I was pretty close to being here to begin with.

When I got picked up on waivers by the Braves in the off-season, I knew this team knew my history and had seen me before.

When I left home for rookie ball in Peoria, Arizona, I didn't have a clue. Coming out of high school, you're pretty immature. I had to grow up pretty quick and learn how to take care of myself out there. If you were late going somewhere, it was completely unacceptable. You'd be at the stadium the next day at 5 a.m. running laps. I think it happened to everybody at least once.

> "WHEN I GOT PICKED UP ON WAIVERS BY THE BRAVES IN THE OFF-SEASON, I KNEW THIS TEAM KNEW MY HISTORY..."

There are only a couple of guys that were in rookie ball with me that are still playing. They tell you that when you first sign. They tell you, "Look to your left, look to your right. Those guys won't be here in a few years." You don't believe it at the time, but as you move up and guys get older, they just start to disappear.

I went from single A to the major leagues in one year, 2006. When I started the year in single A, I was told that there weren't a lot of relievers ahead of me. I was 21-years-old in the Cal League and did pretty well. I got sent up to Double A after 2 months and did about two months there. I went up to Triple A for about a week, and got called up to the big leagues in August. All of a sudden, I was there. I reached every stop, but I wasn't there for long.

A lot of it is luck. A lot of baseball is being in the right place at the right time and just being lucky.

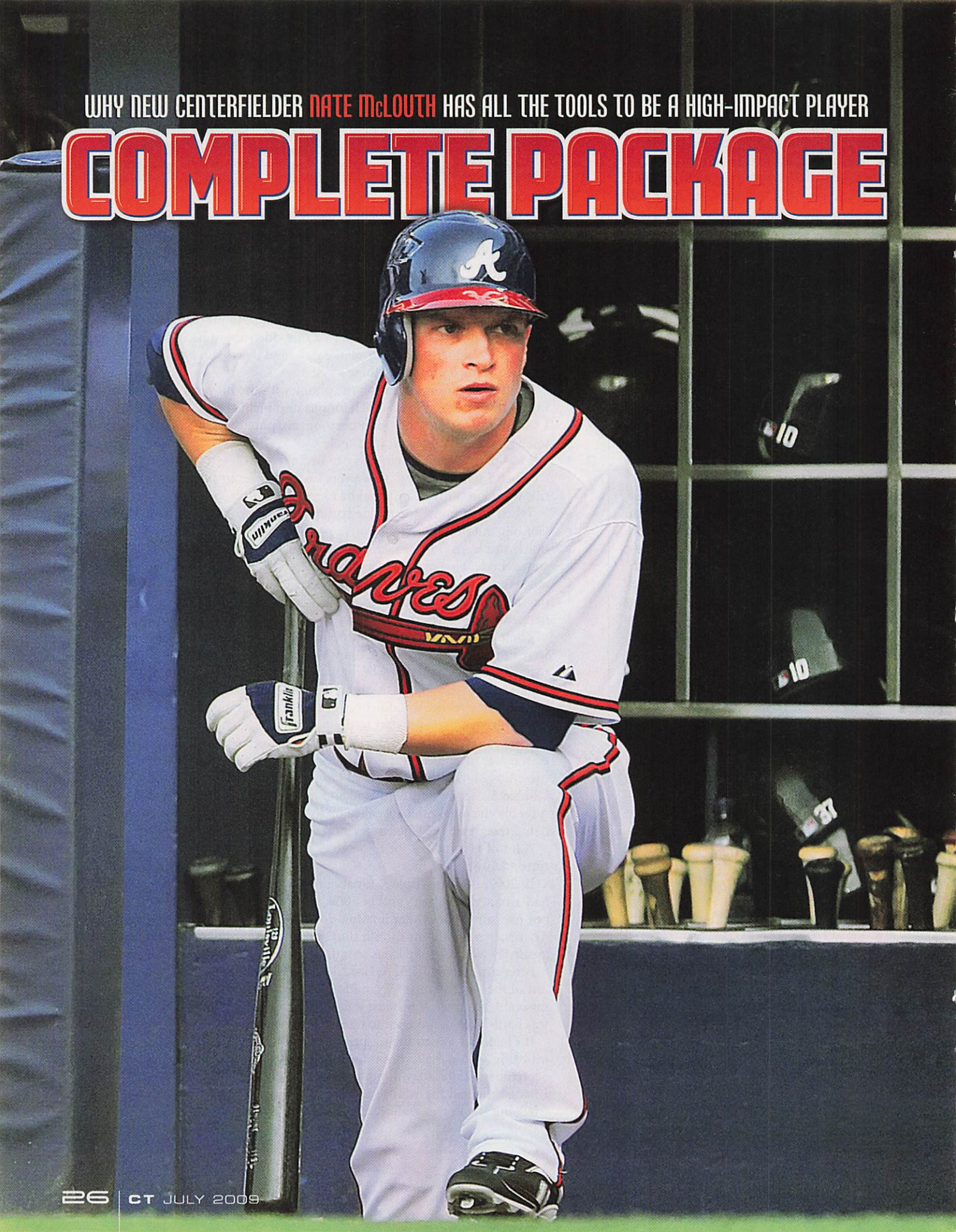
In 2007, I was in Triple A for about eight games before getting called up. I had a pretty good year, and in 2008, I made the team out of spring training but had some back inflammation. I had a chance to make my first opening day roster, so I kept my mouth shut and pitched through it. When it got progressively worse, finally I was sent down because I wasn't performing.

After a month in Triple A, I said, "I can't do this anymore." I didn't pitch the rest of the year, because we could never get it to loosen up. That was a pretty miserable summer. It was just inflammation that wouldn't go away, because I was hard-headed and tried to fight through it for so long.

If I had said something in spring and shut it down for a couple of weeks, I probably would have been fine. I didn't get back on the mound until September. I think they thought they could slip me through waivers, because I hadn't pitched the whole year, and when I did pitch, I wasn't good. They tried, but the Braves grabbed me. It was a good fit.

WHY NEW CENTERFIELDER NATE McLOUTH HAS ALL THE TOOLS TO BE A HIGH-IMPACT PLAYER

COMPLETE PACKAGE



BY RAY GLIER

NATE McLOUTH'S worth as a baseball player can be measured in those 90 feet between first and second base. Those 90 feet are his yardstick, a way to define him. To size up McLouth as a baseball player, look at his numbers in that runway between first and second that turn a baserunner into a scoring threat.

He's close to perfect - and it's no recent trend.

As a senior in high school, McLouth was 51 for 51 stealing bases. Okay, so that's high school competition, but he also had stolen 28 straight bases, the longest active streak in the majors, when the Braves acquired him from Pittsburgh June 3 for righthander Charlie Morton, speedy centerfield prospect Gorkys Hernandez, and Class-A lefty Jeff Locke.

Make no mistake, McLouth is not known mainly for stealing bases - but when he does it, he's exceptional, just as he is at all phases of the game. He's a 20/20 (home runs/steals) man (26/23 last year), something the Braves haven't had since Andruw Jones in 2000, and he's also an All-Star and a Gold Glove outfielder.

In short, he can do it all. He's also relatively young (27) and is under contract at least through 2011 (team option for 2012). If McLouth (rhymes with Mouth) sounds like he's a complete package, that's because he is.

Among other things, he led the National League in doubles last year (46, which is only three shy of the Atlanta record). He led all NL centerfielders with a .997 fielding percentage in 2008 when he made but one error and won a Gold Glove as one of the three best fielding outfielders in the league. He had yet to commit an error this season at this writing.

Getting back to what he can do on the bases, McLouth leads all major leaguers in stolen base percentage since 2005 (92.8 percent). In his brief career, he's 64-of-69 in steals and has been thrown out by a catcher just once. The other four times he was caught were on pickoffs.

No one's perfect, and few even like the pressure of trying for flawlessness. But McLouth is someone who doesn't mind that at all. In fact, he expects it of himself.

"You have to strive to be perfect, that's the only way to play," McLouth said. "You can't be afraid to make mistakes, either, because then you get too tentative. But you have to try and make every play, do everything right."

It's that makeup and approach that McLouth has carried with him in nine professional seasons, since signing in 2000 after the Pirates drafted him in the 25th round. He knows he's not perfect, but why not chase such precision and see what happens?

However, if diligence and work ethic were all that McLouth could offer, his career would have fizzled back in Class A ball at a minor league outpost like Hickory, N.C., or Lynchburg, Va.

McLouth, who is listed generously at 5-feet-11, also brings a quick, compact swing, which helped him pile up 76 extra-base hits last year, eighth in the NL, and finish fifth in runs scored (113). After being the Pirates' fourth outfielder for much of 2005-07, McLouth came into his own last year when he was named to the All-Star team in his first season as a regular.

"What does he bring to us?" repeated another All-Star, Brian McCann, whose locker is next to McLouth's stall. "Something of everything. Some power, speed, defense, a good guy in here in the clubhouse."

McLouth was considered a centerpiece of the Pirates' organization until he was traded. Now, he's a centerpiece for the Braves, not only for this year but also for the next two or three seasons at least. With his combination of speed and power, he's capable of batting just about anywhere in the order, including leadoff and third. In fact, his batted third in his first game as a Brave, with Chipper Jones dropping to the cleanup slot.

"I can bring a little bit of everything," McLouth said, in under-stated fashion. "I'm not outstanding at one specific part of the game, but I would like to think I can do a little of everything."

He does a little bit of everything - on and off the field. A native of Muskegon, Michigan, he honors his roots by maintaining his off-season home in Michigan

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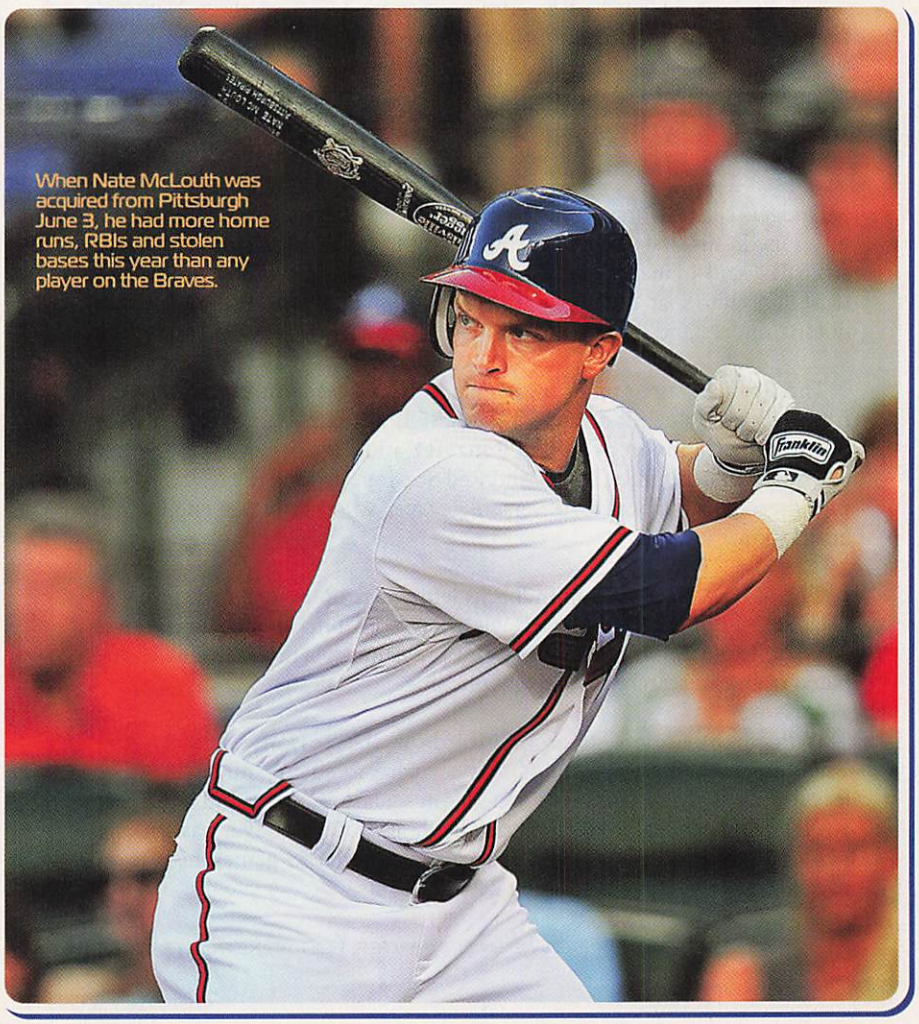


When Nate McLouth was acquired from Pittsburgh June 3, he had more home runs, RBIs and stolen bases this year than any player on the Braves.

PHOTOS: ATLANTA BRAVES

BY KEN ROSENTHAL

HARD WORK PAYING OFF FOR PHILLIES' HOWARD

IN EARLY JUNE, Phillies first baseman **Ryan Howard** rated higher defensively than the Yankees' **Mark Teixeira**, according to the plus-minus ratings on **Bill James** Online. "Defensively, he's absolutely extraordinary right now," said Phillies general manager **Ruben Amaro Jr.** of Howard. "He's literally playing a Gold Glove-caliber first base right now, in every phase." Howard, who had just one error at press time, was not previously regarded as a strong fielder, but worked hard to overcome his deficiencies.

It's difficult to imagine the Padres moving righthander **Jake Peavy** before the July 31 trading deadline unless A) The Cubs receive permission to take on his contract while their ownership is in transition or B) A surprise bidder emerges and persuades Peavy to waive his no-trade clause. Neither scenario appears likely, creating the possibility that Peavy might not be traded until the off-season. The Padres budgeted to carry him through 2009, but Peavy's rising salaries would command too high a percentage of their payroll in the coming years. A trade of Peavy, the 2007 Cy Young Award winner, to the Dodgers, the Padres' biggest rival, is all but out of the question.

The Yankees, in need of a setup man, were targeting three National League closers - the Rockies' **Huston Street**, the Diamondbacks' **Chad Qualls** and the Astros' **Jose Valverde**. Each of those pursuits, however, was complicated. The Rockies did not plan to trade Street until July 31, if at all. Qualls recently missed time with forearm tightness. And Valverde had been on the disabled list since April 26 with a right calf strain.

Dodgers catcher **Russell Martin** hit 19 home runs in 2007 and 13 in '08, but none in his first 193 at-bats this year. Martin gets frustrated when he struggles, said manager Joe Torre, and lengthens his swing. He needs to trust himself to snap out of it, and stay with a more compact approach. "He doesn't understand his true capabilities," Torre said.

The Rockies' surge under new manager **Jim Tracy** put most of their trade talk on hold, but outfielder **Ryan Spilborghs** remained expendable due to the promotion of **Carlos Gonzalez** and presence of **Matt Murton** at Triple A. The Phillies, Tigers and Red Sox were among the teams showing interest in Spilborghs, a versatile player who is not yet eligible for arbitration.

One scout who saw Diamondbacks lefthander **Doug Davis** recently was decidedly unimpressed. After Davis threw 101 pitches in four innings against the punchless Giants, the scout proclaimed, "He is officially eliminated from our search" for starting pitching.

With slightly more than one-third of the season complete, the Diamondbacks' **Mark Reynolds** was on pace to shatter his own major league record of 204 strikeouts in a season set last year - yet still not finish with the highest total in the majors. The Rangers' **Chris Davis** was striking out at an even higher rate – through his team's first 59 games, he was on pace to finish with an astonishing 239 strikeouts.

KEM ROSENTHAL IS A SENIOR WRITER FOR FOXSPORTS.COM

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

despite the cold weather. He gave 200 autographed baseball cards to his high school coach, Warren Zweigle, to sell to raise money for the program.

In Pittsburgh, he organized the Lucky 13 club, commemorative of his jersey number. The Pirates provided tickets to a select group of 13 disadvantaged kids and, once a homestand, McLouth would provide the food at the ballpark. He said he will bring the program to Atlanta.

McLouth is so revered back at his alma mater, Whitehall High School, and in Muskegon County, that 12 friends gathered at Zweigle's house the night McLouth was to debut for the Braves. McLouth calls Zweigle every two weeks "just to check in," and this is nearly a decade after he played for the man.

Muskegon County, with its dependence on auto supply shops and warehouses, has taken a huge hit economically during the recession because it feeds off business in Detroit. McLouth remains as blue collar as the people he grew up around, which is why he was distressed to leave a blue-collar city like Pittsburgh.

"It's a real tough time in the whole state (Michigan), and I know how lucky I am to be doing what I'm doing," McLouth said. "My parents have not been affected by it, so we're thankful for that. But for a lot of people up there, it is a tough time right now."

McLouth's resume seems never-ending. He played with a broken left wrist his sophomore season at Whitehall rather than miss the season. He carried a 3.95 GPA and was the quarterback of the high school's football team.

For his high school baseball career, which included four seasons as a varsity starter, McLouth stole 180 of 181 bases and hit over .500 each season.

"The only time he got caught stealing was when we were in the transition of making him steal on the first pitch, because we couldn't afford not to have him in scoring position right away," Zweigle said. "Before, he had always waited for the right count, the best opportunity. He didn't get a good jump, he wasn't quite comfortable, and it was a bang-bang play, and they got him."

McLouth played second base his senior season at Whitehall because that's where the University of Michigan wanted him to play. He had a scholarship and announced he was going to get an education first.

McLouth slipped to the 25th round of the draft because he was adamant about going to school, and so were his parents. When Pittsburgh failed to sign an early-round

pick the club suddenly had bonus money to throw at McLouth and signed him for $500,000, which was outrageous money for a 25th-round pick.

It did not seem so outrageous when McLouth started his climb up the minor league ladder with batting averages of .300 in Lynchburg, .322 in Altoona, and .297 in Indianapolis.

Still, McLouth ran into doubters. Former Pirates manager Jim Tracy, now with the Rockies, was demeaning to McLouth, calling him "a nice piece to have." Tracy preferred a flashier centerfielder, Nyjer Morgan.

"Nate is a gift to baseball," said Zweigle. "He comes from small town, rural America, and kids from places like that rarely go on to the bigs. He is a kid that nearly every scout defined to me as being too short to play major league baseball, and here he is one of 600. He once told me he saw another player get to the ballpark earlier than him. The next day, he made sure he was the first one there."

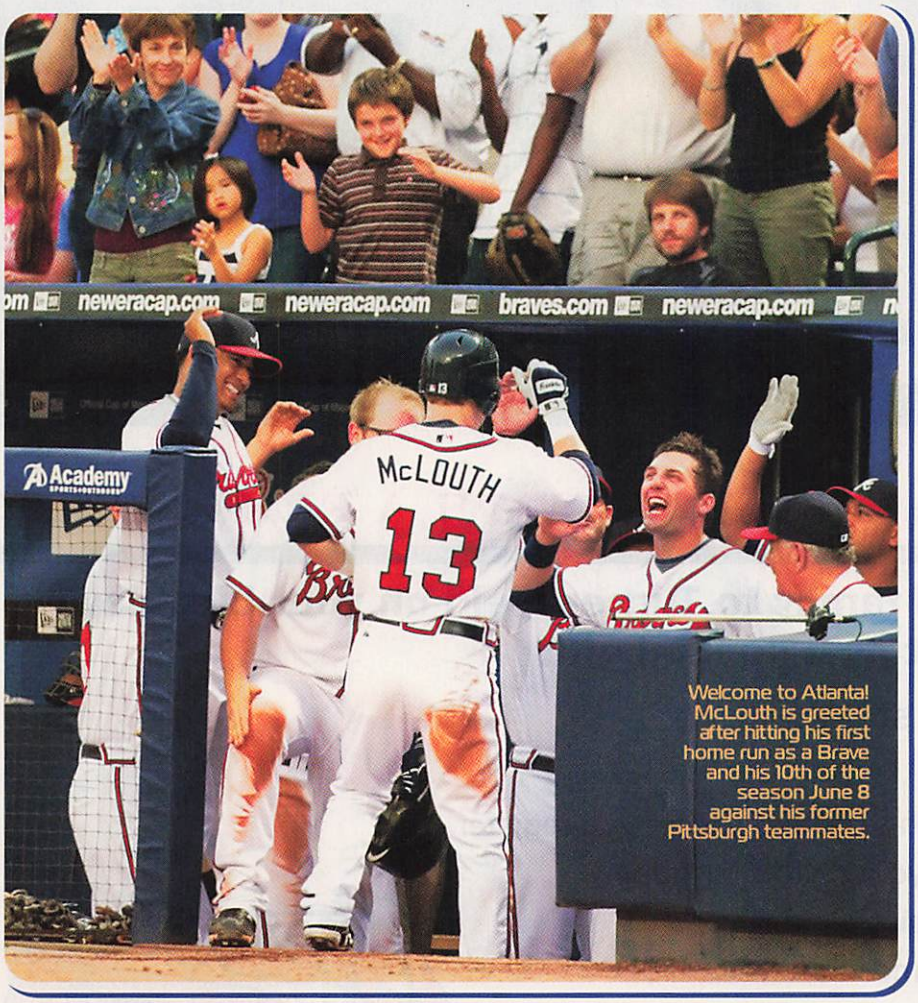
When Tracy was ousted as the Pirates' manager, McLouth had his chance and emerged in 2008.

Finally on display full-time was a compact, left-handed swing (he throws right), unleashed by quick hands. A pitch can be even with McLouth's front shoulder, seemingly too deep for him to hit, yet he can turn and lash it down the right-field line.

He hits most of his home runs down the right-field line (only 330 at Turner Field) and sends doubles into the right-center gap. In the big, right-center power alley (390 feet) of Turner Field, McLouth should continue to rack up a lot of doubles.

A .261 career hitter (career-high .276 last year), McLouth also should benefit from hitting in front of Chipper and McCann on a daily basis, a luxury he didn't enjoy in Pittsburgh where there was frequent turnover. He was much more productive in the first half last year (.280, 22 home runs) than in the second half when Jason Bay and Xavier Nady were traded.

"It's nice to be a piece of the lineup, just a small part of the lineup here," McLouth said. "To have guys around me like Chipper and McCann is awesome."



Welcome to Atlanta! McLouth is greeted after hitting his first home run as a Brave and his 10th of the season June 8 against his former Pittsburgh teammates.

ATLANTA BRAVES

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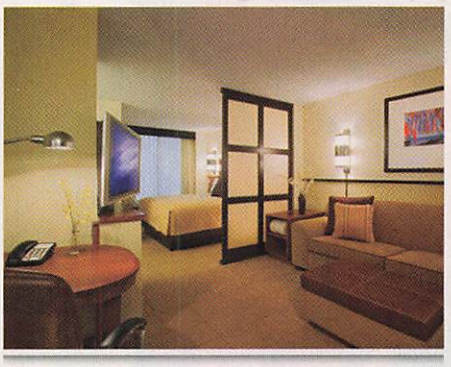

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SWING AND A MISS: STRIKEOUT RATES

ATLANTA BRAVES

Kelly Johnson is on pace to cut down his strikeout rate again this year, something he's accomplished each season he's played since he was a rookie in 2005.

BY STEVE FALL

COMPARED TO recent seasons, Braves pitchers have been whipping the ball past opposing batters much more often. While the staff also has finesse pitchers, Javier Vazquez, Mike Gonzalez and Rafael Soriano all had far more strikeouts than innings pitched.

The Braves tied for the fourth-highest strikeout total (383) in the National League (through June 1). They have not finished with a ranking that high since 1999. In 2005, the pitching staff placed last in the league in strikeouts. They followed that by ranking 12th, 8th and 12th from 2006 through 2008.

At the plate, Atlanta hitters had the fourth fewest strikeouts (316) in the NL. Strikeouts mean less for hitters than pitchers, so their high ranking isn't as significant. While it's obviously not a good thing to strike out, hitters that accumulate high totals usually bundle them with positives like home runs and frequent walks.

On the other hand, pitchers with strong strikeout numbers possess the ability to "miss bats." Pitchers that lack this skill usually have a difficult time sustaining success. Tom Glavine managed to win two Cy Young Awards without logging frequent strikeouts, but he is the exception. Strikeouts are the only positive outcome that a pitcher completely controls – aside from rare unassisted defensive plays like catching line drives – so they play a huge role in their performance. Pitchers need help from their fielders for other positive outcomes like doubleplays, groundball outs and flyouts.

While strikeout totals get more attention, strikeout rate makes a better statistic for comparing both hitters and pitchers. It is the percentage of strikeouts in total plate appearances. Braves fans may expect a slugger like Andruw Jones to have the team's worst strikeout rate. But Wilson Betemit (23.8 percent) holds that distinction among non-pitchers since the franchise moved to Atlanta in 1966 (minimum: 500 plate appearances). Jones places 15th with 19.2 percent, three spots after Dale Murphy (19.5). Jeff Francoeur ranks 20th (18.3).

When it comes to striking out the least, former infielder Felix Millan stands alone. Millan, a pesky hitter who choked almost halfway up the bat handle, struck out in just 4.4 percent of his plate appearances when he spent 1966 through 1972 in Atlanta. He was a three-time All-Star and led the NL in strikeout rate four times.

For many young hitters, strikeouts are a necessary evil. But as long as they keep trending in the right direction and produce, teams can live with them. In his rookie season at age 23, Kelly Johnson struck out 75 times in 334 plate appearances. That gave him a 22.5 strikeout rate for the 2005 season. After missing all of 2006, Johnson dropped that to 19.2 percent in 2007 and 18.4 last year. He stood at 15.3 percent this season through June 1.

When examining pitchers' strikeout rates, relievers dominate the leaders in Atlanta Braves history. Former closer John Rocker tops everybody with an amazing 30.7 percent strikeout rate (minimum: 500 batters faced). Mark Wohlers (26.0), Rudy Seanez (25.1), Mike Remlinger (24.8) and Kerry Ligtenberg (23.2) follow Rocker. John Smoltz, who placed ninth at 21.6 percent, leads all starting pitchers. Peter Moylan (18.1) ranks highest among current Braves at 20th overall.

If statistics for the Boston and Milwaukee Braves are included, there's little change in these rankings. The top 18 strikeout rates all belong to Atlanta pitchers. That's because hitters strike out more today than ever before. The Braves had just seven 100-strikeout seasons by hitters through 1959. They've already had 19 so far this decade.

Two months into his age-23 season, Jair Jurrjens owns a 3.40 ERA in a Braves uniform. Only Craig McMurtry (3.08) managed a lower figure among Atlanta Braves with 200 innings pitched through age 23. Steve Avery (3.49), George Stone (3.62) and Smoltz (3.68) come next.

With 18 victories as a Brave, Jurrjens already tops all but five pitchers through the same age: Avery (50), Stone (31), Smoltz (28), Glavine (23) and Kevin Millwood (22). And the young righthander still has over half a season left.

Jurrjens also ranks among the best Atlanta Braves pitchers of any age at avoiding home runs. He had surrendered just .53 homers per nine innings. Only five pitchers with at least 200 innings lead Jurrjens: Wohlers (.47), Zane Smith (.47), Carl Morton (.50), Greg McMichael (.51) and Clay Carroll (.52). Jurrjens holds a slim lead over seventh place Greg Maddux (.54).

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Greg Maddux

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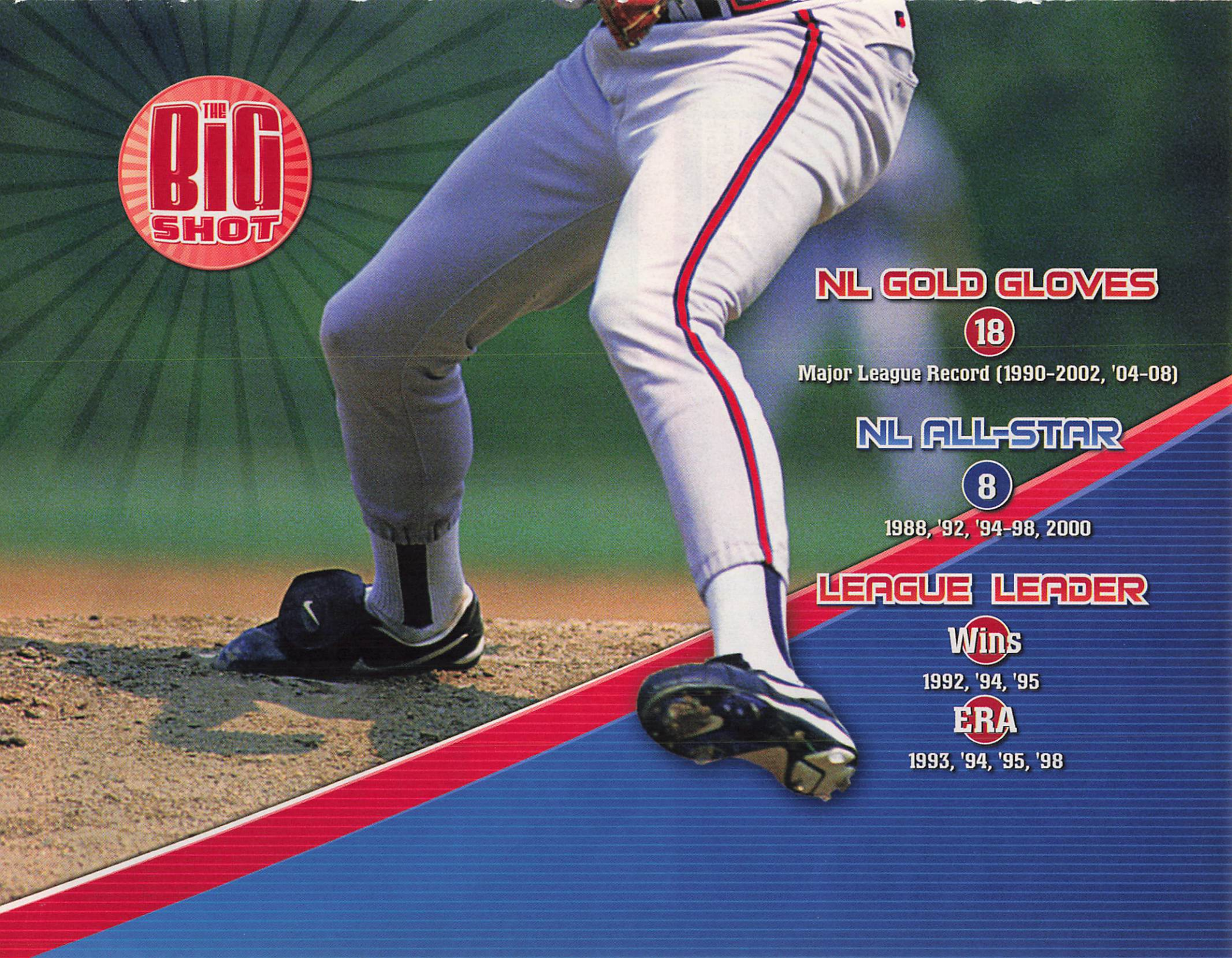
2. Walter Johnson	417	1927
3. Grover Alexander	373	1929
4. Christy Mathewson	373	1916
5. Warren Spahn	363	1965
6. Pud Galvin	361	1892
7. Kid Nichols	361	1905
8. GREG MADDUX	355	2008

NL CY YOUNG AWARDS

4

1992 (Cubs), '93, '94, '95


THE BIG SHOT
NL GOLD GLOVES
18
Major League Record (1990-2002, '04-08)
NL ALL-STAR
8
1988, '92, '94-98, 2000
LEAGUE LEADER
Wins
1992, '94, '95
ERA
1993, '94, '95, '98

Bullpen
KILLER RIBS & SMOKIN' QUE

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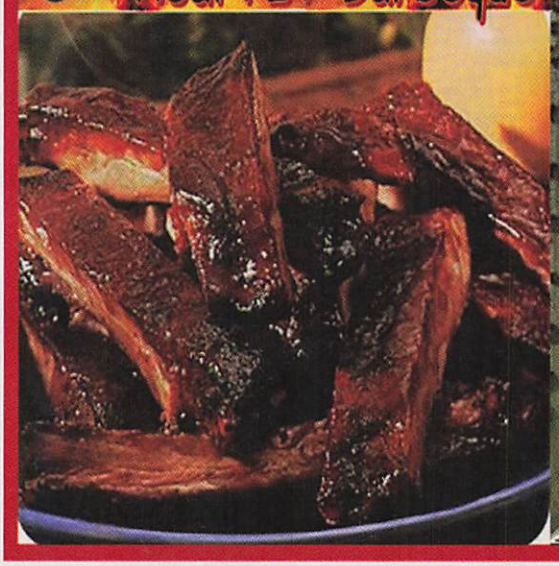

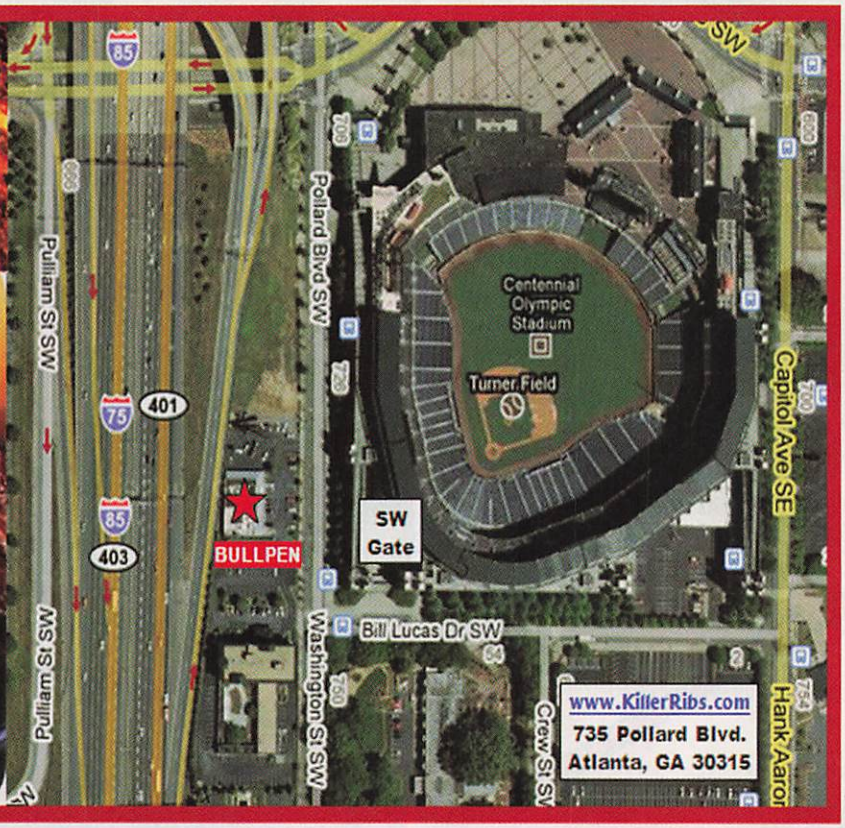

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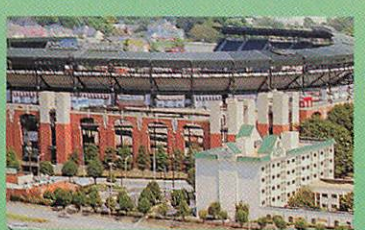

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RARE MILESTONE

Bobby Cox Is Only The Fourth Manager To Reach 2,000 Victories With One Club

BY MARK BOWMAN
OF MLB.COM

WHEN DARREL CHANEY'S name was mentioned during the wee hours of the morning on June 9, Bobby Cox had to momentarily think before remembering Chaney was a shortstop on the first team he managed in the majors.

Cox's momentary lapse of memory could easily be explained by the fact that so much had occurred during the four-hour, 46-minute game his Braves had just played. Or maybe by the fact that he's experienced so much more since the night of April 10, 1978, when Chaney delivered a ninth-inning, pinch-hit homer that gave the Braves an 8-7 win over the Padres at Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium.

Chaney's home run provided Cox his first win as a major league manager. His 2,000th victory as the Braves' manager came courtesy of a David Ross infield single that completed a 7-6, 15-inning win over the Pirates at Turner Field June 8.

"It's not a big deal at all," Cox said. "It's something you don't think about. All it means is you're getting old and you've been around a long time."

Cox has been successful long enough to rank fourth on baseball's all-time list with 2,355 career wins. This latest milestone makes him just the fourth manager to record 2,000 wins with one club.

The others to accomplish this are Connie Mack (A's), John McGraw (Giants) and Walter Alston (Dodgers), who are all enshrined in the Hall of Fame that seemingly already has a spot reserved for Cox.

"It's just another notch in his Hall of Fame belt," said Chipper Jones. "He's the best there is, and we're all happy for him. We're sorry it took five hours to get it for him. But I think he'll take it, nonetheless."

While Jones has been a mainstay in Cox's lineup since 1995, All-Star catcher Brian McCann now finds himself with the privilege of playing for the manager that he watched throughout his youthful days, growing up in suburban Atlanta.

"I grew up idolizing this team and idolizing Bobby Cox from a young age," McCann said. "To be a part of this is amazing. He's one of the greatest managers of all-time, and I'm blessed to play for him."

John Schuerholz addresses the fans while Frank Wren presents Bobby Cox with a special award for his 2,000th victory as Braves manager.

PATTY HASKINS/SSEN

MOST WINS WITH ONE TEAM

CONNIE MACK (PHILADELPHIA ATHLETICS)	3,582	1901-50
JOHN MCGRAW (NEW YORK GIANTS)	2,583	1902-32
WALTER ALSTON (BROOKLYN/LOS ANGELES DODGERS)	2,040	1954-76
BOBBY COX (ATLANTA BRAVES)	2,001*	1977-81, 1990-PRESENT

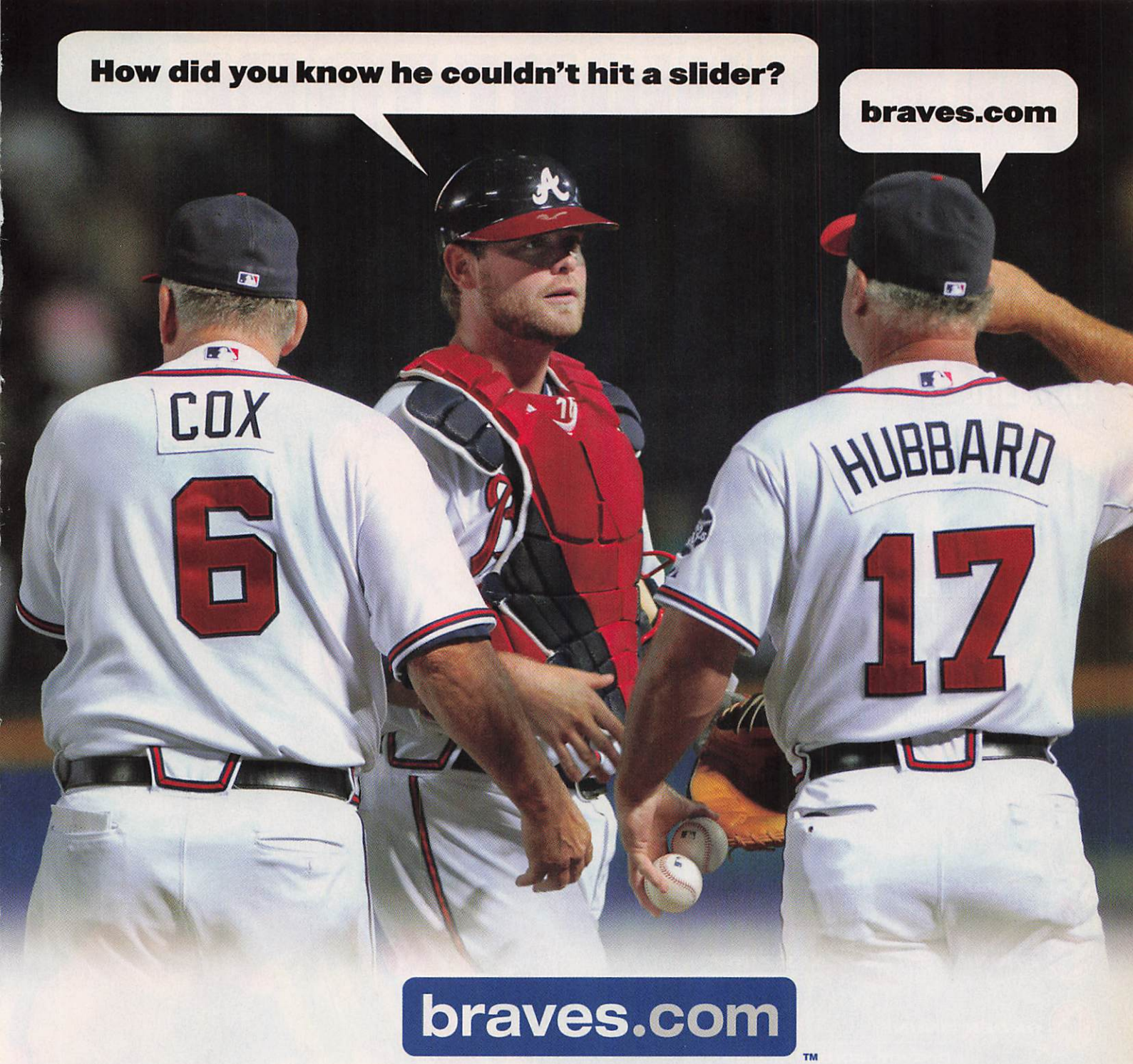
* THROUGH JUNE 9

Cox began his managerial career with the Braves in 1978 and remained in that role until he was dismissed after the 1981 season. Given the opportunity to lead the Blue Jays during the '82 season, he then enjoyed a successful four-season stint in Toronto before returning to Atlanta.

During a five-season stint as the Braves' general manager from 1985-90, Cox added the managerial role to his duties midway through the 1990 season and has remained on the Braves' bench since that time. In the process, he led the organization to 14 consecutive division titles, five National League pennants and one World Series championship.

While acknowledging the fact that the current market makes it hard to envision another manager having the opportunity to win 2,000 games with one organization, Cox once again gave credit to his players.

"I've been lucky," Cox said. "We've always had great players here, and I've been able to keep going. If you get that many, you've had some good players."



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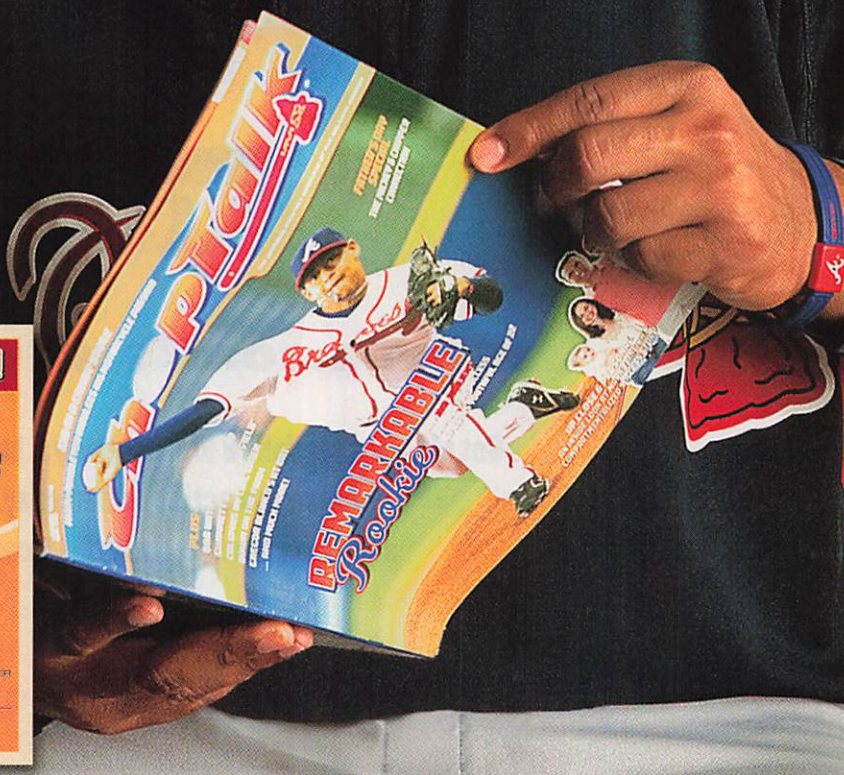
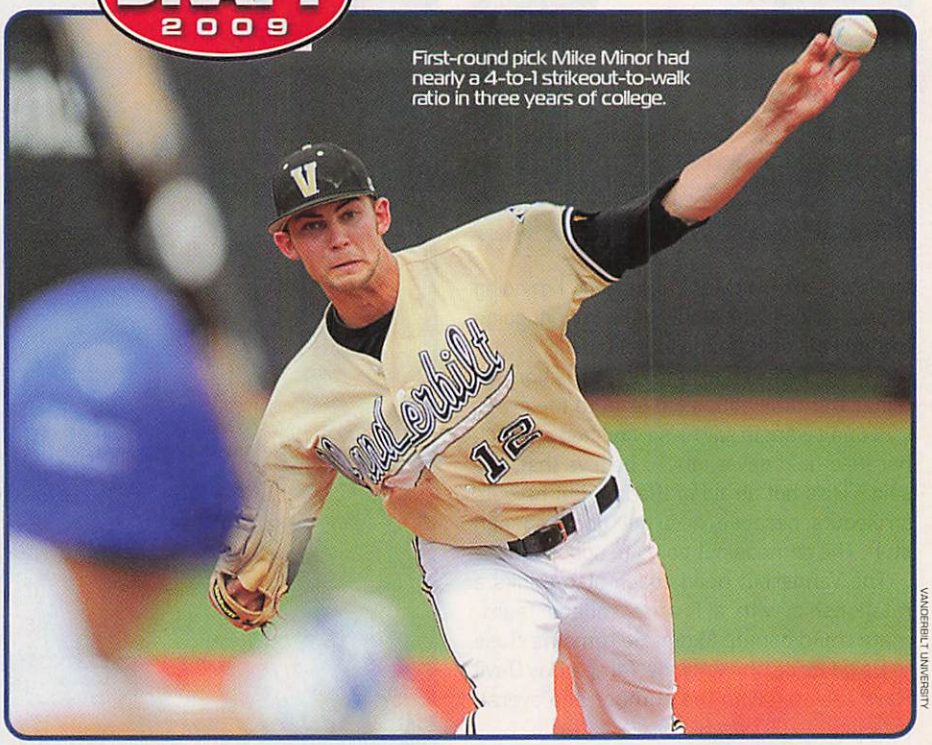


"Polished" Lefty Mike Minor Primed To Prove His Worth Quickly In Pro Ranks

HEAD OF THE CLASS

DRAFT 2009

BY BRIAN KNAPP


First-round pick Mike Minor had nearly a 4-to-1 strikeout-to-walk ratio in three years of college.

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

MIKE MINOR hails from a small central Tennessee town of roughly 1,000 people, but he wields a left arm that was built for bright lights and big cities.

Chosen by the Braves with the seventh overall pick in the Major League Baseball First-Year Player Draft, the 21-year-old lefthander posted a 22-10 career record at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tenn., and ranks fourth on the school's all-time list for strikeouts (303). He went 6-6 as a junior and averaged better than a strikeout per inning.

Braves scouting director Roy Clark likens Minor to Joe Saunders, the Angels lefthander who won 17 games and made the American League All-Star team last season.

"To me," Clark said, "he has better stuff than Joe Saunders at this stage."

Having grown up a little less than 200 miles from Atlanta, Minor admitted he was thrilled when the Braves called his name in the first round.

"It was a pretty special feeling, knowing I'm going to be so close to home," Minor said. "I can't really explain it, growing up knowing the Braves and cheering for them. They were the hometown team for us."

Vanderbilt head coach Tim Corbin, who recruited Minor out of Forrest High School in Chapel Hill, Tenn., and coached him for three years, calls the 6-foot-4, 195-pounder a polished pitcher capable of advancing quickly through the Atlanta farm system.

"In my way of thinking, they're getting a very refined professional pitcher," Corbin said. "He had a very good career at Vanderbilt. Some things were just engrained in him – his competitive nature and the ability to throw strikes."

Minor commands four pitches, including an 89- to 93-miles-per-hour fastball, a major league-ready changeup, a slider and a curveball, which he developed between his sophomore and junior seasons at Vanderbilt. A fearless competitor on the mound, he pounded the strike zone with regularity in the Southeastern Conference. In three seasons with the Commodores, he carried a nearly 4-to-1 strikeout-to-walk ratio.

"The radar gun gets you drafted," Clark said, "but to be successful in the major leagues, you've got to be able to pitch, and he can really pitch."

Minor, who won't turn 22 until December, believes the hitting-rich SEC helped prepare him for the professional jump.

"It was the best conference for me to better myself, to get me ready for the pros," he said. "You're facing four or five really good hitters every game."

What's more, Minor gained invaluable experience at the international level as a member of the United States national team. The squad went 24-0 in the summer of 2008 and won the International University Sports Federation world championship in the Czech Republic. Minor even outperformed Stephen Strasburg, the top pick in the 2009 draft (Washington Nationals), by going 3-0 with a microscopic 0.75 earned run average and beating the vaunted Cuban national team twice.

"They picked him to start the championship game against Japan," Clark said. "He was the team ace, over a guy named Stephen Strasburg."

In two years with Team USA, Minor won eight of 10 decisions and carried a 1.17 ERA. He struck out 74 in 69 innings and made his presence known on the field and in the dugout, just as he did at Vanderbilt.

"He's a great teammate," Corbin said. "He's not a rah-rah guy, but leaders come in all shapes and sizes. He cares about winning and losing. You could tell he was invested in our team."

Should Minor sign before the Aug. 17 deadline, he will enter a farm system replete with young, talented arms, including Cole Rohrbough, Julio Teheran and last year's top pick, Brett DeVall. He knows a great challenge lies ahead.

"I'll be facing the best hitters in the country all the time," Minor said. "Just going through

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

In two years of international competition with Team USA, Minor was 8-2 with a 1.17 ERA and averaged over a strikeout per inning.

the levels, they all want to make it. I'm going to go after guys the whole time. I'm not going to stop until I get [to the big leagues]."

Corbin expects a smooth transition for Minor from the collegiate level to the pros.

"I don't want to say he's a finished product, because he'd never let you believe that," he said. "He's not afraid of the bat, but he gets strikeouts because he's got good enough stuff. The game is not going to spook him."

The Vanderbilt head coach also thinks a relationship with a former college teammate could benefit Minor. He remains close to David Price, the lefty the Tampa Bay Devil Rays selected with the number one overall pick in the 2007 draft.

"They definitely talk some," Corbin said. "I think Price is a good role model for him. He was a great college player, got drafted in the first round, and moved up the ladder pretty quickly. He can give Mike an idea of what pro baseball is like."

Clark, meanwhile, reserves judgment as to where Minor fits in Atlanta's future plans. Talent evaluators, pitching coaches, and the young lefty's own performance will determine his fate.

"I don't want to put limitations on anybody," Clark said. "That will be for him to decide once he gets in our system."

Minor – who also was drafted out of high school by Tampa Bay in 2006 (13th round) but elected instead to attend Vanderbilt and improve his stock – sounds confident heading into the next stage of his career.

"I feel like a big leaguer already," he said. "I have to earn my spot. I feel like I'm a polished pitcher. I pound the zone. I throw four pitches for strikes. I've been waiting for this moment my whole life. Now is my time. I'm a Brave now."

2009 ATLANTA BRAVES DRAFT
BY ROUND

ROUND	PICK	NAME	POSITION	SCHOOL
1	7	Mike Minor	LHP	Vanderbilt University (Tenn.)
3	87	David Hale	RHP	Princeton University (N.J.)
4	118	Mycal Jones	SS	Miami-Dade Community College South (Fla.)
5	148	David Berryhill	RHP	Newberry College (S.C.)
6	178	Ryan Woolley	RHP	University of Alabama-Birmingham
7	208	Robert Hefflinger	OF	Georgia Perimeter College
8	238	Kyle Rose	OF	Northwest Shoals Community College (Ala.)
9	268	Matthew Weaver	SS	Burlington Community College (N.J.)
10	298	Aaron Northcraft	RHP	Mater Dei High School (Calif.)
11	328	Christopher Masters	LHP	Western Carolina University (N.C.)
12	358	Christopher Lovett	SS	Columbia State Community College (Tenn.)
13	388	Jordan Kreke	3B	Eastern Illinois University
14	418	Cory Harrilchak	OF	Elon University (N.C.)
15	448	Bennett Pickar	C	Eaton High School (Colo.)
16	478	Riaan Spanjer-Furstenburg	1B	Nova Southeastern University (Fla.)
17	508	Jace Whitmer	C	Kennesaw State University (Ga.)
18	538	Jakob Dalfonso	3B	Middle Georgia College
19	568	Tyrelle Harris	RHP	University of Tennessee
20	598	Jeffrey Lorick	LHP	University of Virginia
21	628	Matt Crim	LHP	The Citadel (S.C.)
22	658	James Weber	RHP	St. Petersburg Junior College (Fla.)
23	688	Lucas La Point	RHP	William J. Knight High School (Calif.)
24	718	Casey Upperman	RHP	Notre Dame High School (Ariz.)
25	748	Ethan Icard	RHP	Wilkes Community College (N.C.)
26	778	William Scott	RHP	Walters State Community College (Tenn.)
27	808	Joseph Leftridge	OF	Howard College (Tex.)
28	838	Eric Swegman	RHP	Young Harris College (Ga.)
29	868	Bobby Rauh	OF	Daytona Beach Community College (Fla.)
30	898	Vince Howard	OF	Sikeston High School (Mo.)
31	928	Derek Wiley	1B	Belmont University (Tenn.)
32	958	Stephen Montgomery	RHP	Pope High School (Ga.)
33	988	Tyler Stubblefield	SS	Kennesaw State University (Ga.)
34	1,018	Arby Fields	OF	Los Osos High School (Calif.)
35	1,048	Matt Hartunian	C	Montclair Prep High School (Calif.)
36	1,078	Andrew Wilson	RHP	Liberty University (Va.)
37	1,108	Matthew Moynihan	OF	Cathedral Catholic High School (Calif.)
38	1,138	Tripp Faulk	OF	North Myrtle Beach High School (S.C.)
39	1,168	Joey Bourgeios	RHP	Louisiana State University at Eunice
40	1,198	Antonio Carrillo	OF	San Ysidro High School (Calif.)
41	1,228	Kyle Petter	LHP	El Camino College (Calif.)
42	1,258	Joshua Conway	OF	Smithsburg High School (Md.)
43	1,288	Alan Walden	RHP	Red Bank High School (Tenn.)
44	1,318	Corey Newsome	RHP	Bay High School (Fla.)
45	1,348	Nathan Dorris	LHP	Marion High School (Ill.)
46	1,378	George Farmer	RHP	Rockdale County High School (Ga.)
47	1,408	Jonathan Holmes	RHP	Conway High School (S.C.)
48	1,438	Jamie Hayes	RHP	Rider University (N.J.)

Scouting Director Roy Clark Draws Heavily On Pitchers And Collegians With 47 Picks

NEW RECRUITS

DRAFT 2009

BY BRIAN KNAPP

The Atlanta Braves, as has become their custom, leaned heavily on pitching in this year's Major League Baseball First-Year Player Draft on June 9-10. Twenty-five of the team's 47 selections were pitchers, led by first-round pick Mike Minor.

A 21-year-old lefthander out of Vanderbilt University, Minor was taken seventh overall — Atlanta's highest choice since it selected Mike Kelly with the second pick in the 1992 draft.

Roy Clark – who has spent 20 years with the Braves, including the last 10 as scouting director – believes the organization came away with some useful pieces for the future.

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

"We feel good about it," Clark said. "The truth is, 30 scouting directors are going into their general manager's office and telling him they had a good draft. We're no different. I'll be able to tell for sure in four to five years."

Atlanta loaded up on college players this year. In fact, its first eight picks were collegians. The Braves did not choose a high school player until round 10 (298th overall), when they selected Aaron Northcraft, a right-handed pitcher out of Mater Dei High School in California.

Financial limitations steered Atlanta away from the high school ranks, according to Clark. All told, more than 60 percent (30) of the team's draft choices were collegians.

"In the last few years, we've tried to stay within slots," Clark said. "We have budgetary constraints like everyone else. It's tougher to sign high school guys."

Even so, the Braves' philosophy when it comes to player development has not changed much over the years. They go young when the opportunity arises.

"We still like getting kids when they're as young as possible and turning them over to what we consider the finest player development system in Major League Baseball," Clark said. "You don't go against the strength of the draft. If the strength is pitching, you go with pitchers. We do a tremendous amount of research, on and off the field. What we hope is that they all have the potential to play in the major leagues for the Atlanta Braves."

Once Minor came off the board, the Braves plucked David Hale – a 6-foot-2, 195-pound right-handed pitcher – out of Princeton University. Atlanta had no second-round pick, losing it to the Dodgers for signing Derek Lowe. Taken in the third round (87th overall), Hale appeared in 33 games for Princeton as a junior, going 2-3 with a 4.74 earned run average and 47 strikeouts in 40 2/3 innings. Clark likes his upside.

"The first thing you notice about him is his 97-miles-per-hour fastball," he said. "He's got a power arm and a good breaking ball."

Atlanta had its sights set on the Marietta, Ga., native long before he touched down on the Princeton campus.

"I'd seen him in the East Cobb [baseball] program," Clark said. "We've been following him for a long time. He's an athlete and a very bright kid who's wonderful to talk to."

The Braves broke briefly from the arms race and chose a position player with their third selection, when they snatched shortstop Mycal Jones out of Miami-Dade Community College. The Southern Conference Player of the Year (National Junior College Athletic Association), he led the Sharks to a 37-10 record and a top 10 ranking nationally. Jones hit .447 with 14 home runs and 57 runs batted in. Speed is his calling card.

MIAMI DADE COLLEGE

"Mycal's a true shortstop who can fly," Clark said. "He's a very exciting guy. He's got pop in his bat. You always like to get power and speed out of the draft. This happens to be one of those years where we got a couple of guys who can really run."

The Braves also kept up their trend of mining local talent. A number of players they drafted have Georgia ties, including Hale, former University of Georgia product Ryan Woolley (sixth round), Georgia Perimeter College outfielder Robert Hefflinger (seventh round), Kennesaw State University catcher Jace Whitmer (17th round) and Middle Georgia College third baseman Jakob Dalfonso (18th round).

The 6-foot-5, 235-pound Hefflinger, perhaps the top power prospect selected by the Braves, led Georgia Perimeter to a regular-season region championship and 42-16 record. The Gainesville, Ga., native batted .324 with 11 home runs as a freshman and signed with the Braves the day he was drafted.

"He has what they call 'light-tower power,'" Georgia Perimeter coach Danny Blue said. "He can hit the ball out of the ballpark on any pitch and to any place in the park."

Clark – who drafted current Braves Brian McCann, Jeff Francoeur, Kelly Johnson and Tommy Hanson, among others – now waits with baited breath, as Atlanta starts the negotiation process with the players it selected.

"I feel like our draft was solid," he said. "As soon as we get them all signed, I'll be happy."

The Braves' 47 new players include 19 righthanders, six lefthanders, 11 outfielders, four shortstops, three catchers, two first basemen and two third basemen.

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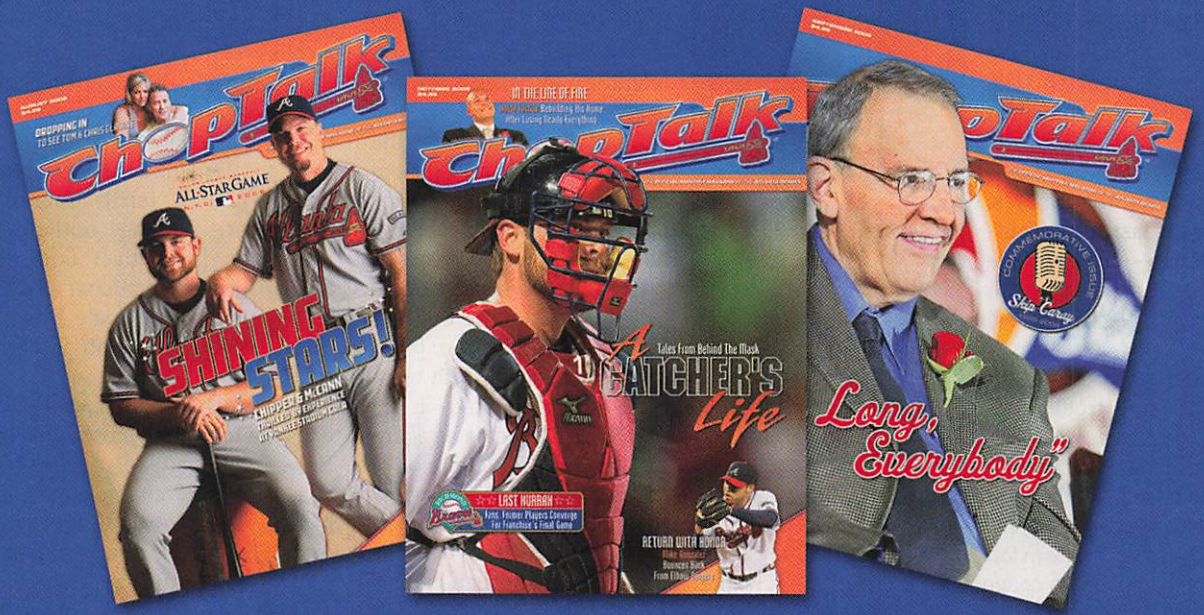

April 2005	Starting Rotation
May 2005	Andruw Jones
June 2005	Tim Hudson
July 2005	Kyle Davies
August 2005	Johnson & Langerhans
September 2005	Jeff Francoeur
October 2005	Andruw Jones
November 2005	Brian McCann
December 2005	Andruw Jones
January 2006	Edgar Renteria
February 2006	Niekro, Aaron, Lemaster
March 2006	LaRoche Family
April 2006	Andruw, Smoltz, Chipper
May 2006	Chris Reitsma
June 2006	Francoeur's Slam
July 2006	Edgar Renteria
August 2006	Brian McCann
September 2006	Bob Wickman
October 2006	John Smoltz
November 2006	Bobby Cox
December 2006	Jeff Francoeur
January 2007	Rafael Soriano
February 2007	Spring Training
March 2007	Mike Gonzalez
April 2007	Andruw Jones (Sold Out)
May 2007	Hubbard & Johnson (Sold Out)
June 2007	John Smoltz
July 2007	Diaz & Harris
August 2007	Edgar Renteria
September 2007	Mark Teixeira
October 2007	Jeff Francoeur
November 2007	Chipper Jones
December 2007	John Smoltz
January 2008	Tom Glavine
February 2008	Tim Hudson
March 2008	Mark Kotsay
April 2008	Teixeira & Jones
May 2008	Brian McCann
June 2008	Jair Jurrjens
July 2008	Chipper Jones
August 2008	McCann & Jones
September 2008	Skip Caray
October 2008	Brian McCann
November 2008	Chipper Jones
December 2008	Pete Van Wieren
January 2009	Frank Wren
February 2009	Hank Aaron
March 2009	Derek Lowe
April 2009	Vazquez, Lowe & Kawakami
May 2009	Bobby Cox & Chipper Jones
June 2009	Jeff Francoeur

ROME'S RODRIGUEZ CAPS CYCLE WITH WALK-OFF HOME RUN IN 10TH

IN 31 YEARS AS PLAYER, coach and manager in the minor leagues, Rome manager Randy Ingle had never witnessed a batter hit for the cycle until May 27. With the second game of a doubleheader tied, 3-3, in the bottom of the 10th inning, Ingle saw the rare feat as well as the first cycle in Rome Braves history when first baseman Gerry Rodriguez hit a walk-off home run to beat Greenville.

"Never been part of a game in which anyone on either team hit for the cycle," Ingle said. "That was a heck of a way for Gerry to get it. And it was a big win for us, because it snapped a four-game losing streak."

Rodriguez began the game with a two-run triple in the first inning before doubling in the third. He then singled in the fifth and lined out to right field in the seventh. By hitting his ninth home run of the season in the 10th inning, Rodriguez concluded the day 4-for-5 with a run scored and four RBIs.

BILL BALLEW

Gerry Rodriguez hit for the first cycle in Rome Braves history.

"I wasn't trying for it," Rodriguez told the Rome News-Tribune. "I was only trying to put a good swing on the ball. I was just thinking: I have to get the game over with."

The 21-year-old from the Dominican Republic signed with the Braves in February 2008 after spending three seasons as a catcher in the Yankees' farm system. He tied for the Appalachian League lead with 49 RBIs at Danville last year, hitting.253 with a team-best 13 home runs. Through June 10 this year, Rodriguez has been the primary power source at Rome, where he has paced the team with 10 homers and 35 RBIs while batting .268.

"He's got some power, and he's very aggressive at the plate," Ingle said. "He's been a big presence in the middle of the lineup. I don't know where we'd be without him."

THE BLUES ERA

Memories of yesteryear were prevalent on May 27 when the Mississippi Braves played in the Rickwood Classic in Birmingham, Ala., against the Barons. The M-Braves wore replicas of the powder blue uniforms worn by Atlanta in the 1980s, and manager Phillip Wellman cautioned his players about making fun of the threads.

"The first uniform I wore with the Braves in 1984 looked just like (these)," Wellman said. "The only difference is the old ones were heavier. The ones we had this year breathed a lot better."

Retired Braves Hall of Fame announcer Pete Van Wieren was on hand to throw out the ceremonial first pitch. He was joined by former Atlanta Journal-Constitution sportswriter Jack Wilkinson, who is working with Van Wieren on the retired broadcaster's memoirs of his time with Atlanta, which included exhibition games in Birmingham in the 1980s.

Third baseman Eric Campbell gave the visitors something to cheer about when he hit his first home run of the season, a two-run shot in the top of the ninth, to lead the M-Braves to a 3-2 win. A crowd of 7,396 filled the country's oldest ballpark (opened in 1910), which hosts a Barons game annually during the last week of May.

The M-Braves wore the powder blue uniforms a second time, on June 11, as part of a "Turn Back the Clock" promotion at Trustmark Park. The jerseys were auctioned, and all tickets to the game cost only $3. Concessions, programs and souvenirs were also discounted.

ED GARDNER

Mississippi pitcher Ryne Reynoso and catcher Phillip Britton look sharp in the powder blue uniforms they wore for the Rickwood Classic.

GWINNETT TRIPLE A

Even the managers need a scorecard at times to keep track of their players at the Triple-A level. That was the case for Gwinnett's **Dave Brundage** in late May and early June. After winning 13 of 15 games at the end of May, the G-Braves lost pitchers **Kris Medlen**, **Tommy Hanson** and **Manny Acosta**, infielders **Diory Hernandez** and **Barbaro Canizares** and outfielders **Brian Barton** and **Gregor Blanco** to promotions to Atlanta. Also departing was pitcher **Charlie Morton**, who was traded to Pittsburgh in the deal for Nate McLouth. "We lost some horses, there's no doubt about that," said G-Braves pitching coach **Derek Botelho**. The

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G-Braves easily led the International League with a 2.15 ERA and 248 strikeouts in May, which resulted in a 20-10 record for the month...

The two players sent down from Atlanta - pitcher **James Parr** and outfielder **Jordan Schafer** - have been hobbled. Parr, who gave up eight earned runs in eight innings in two starts after returning to Triple-A, was placed on the disabled list June 8 with elbow discomfort. After going 0-for-5 in his first game at Gwinnett, Schafer went 4-for-8 with five runs scored in his next two games before missing three games with an injured left hand. An MRI on June 10 revealed a deep bone bruise that Schafer believes he suffered taking a swing on June 5. He was scheduled to miss two weeks...

Outfielder **Brandon Jones** also underwent an MRI that revealed patellar tendinitis in his left knee. Jones, who was hitting .306 with no home runs in 39 games, has been bothered by the knee for most of the first half...

Despite entering June with a .212 batting average, utility infielder **Wes Timmons** earned International League Batter of the Week honors for June 1-7 by hitting .519, including a league-best 14 hits in seven games with five doubles and a .606 on-base percentage. Timmons, who is in his fourth season at the Triple-A level and gave serious consideration to retiring after last season, owned an 11-game hitting streak through June 10 and had raised his batting average to .279. His increased production coincided with his moving to second in the lineup after Hernandez was promoted to Atlanta. Timmons has also been solid defensively, committing only two errors while spending time at all four infield positions...

June 6 was memorable for all the wrong reasons for the G-Braves. While the team had an early-morning flight from Rochester to Atlanta, the equipment truck did not arrive before that night's home game against Columbus. The team hires a trucking company to transport the equipment, but Gwinnett GM Bruce Baldwin learned at 5 p.m. the truck was still 80 miles north of Charlotte. With some help from Atlanta, the G-Braves were able to gather enough gloves, bats and other pieces of equipment to play the game. The Clippers proceeded to defeat Gwinnett, 12-0...

Deunte Heath, one of the hardest throwers in the organization, was promoted to Triple-A for the first time in his career and made his International League debut on June 5. Heath went 2-3 with a 3.47 ERA in 10 starts at Mississippi before surrendering six earned runs in 4 2/3 innings against Rochester...

Tony Armas, who was signed in mid-May, allowed only nine earned runs in his first six outings, including five starts, yet did not have a decision. Armas has been effective but limits his time on the mound by going deep into counts against too many hitters...

The G-Braves received **Jon Huber** on June 8, when Parr was placed on the disabled list. Huber, 27, was signed as a free agent after going 1-0 with two saves and a 3.63 ERA for the Lancaster Barnstormers in the independent Atlantic League. He pitched at Triple-A Tacoma in 2008 and appeared in 25 games with the Seattle Mariners in 2006-07...

First baseman Canizares, the Braves' lone representative in the 2008 Triple-A All-Star Game, led the IL with 76 hits, including 10 multi-hit performances in his last 15 games. He was also in the league's top five in batting average, doubles, RBIs, extra-base hits and slugging percentage.

MISSISSIPPI
DOUBLE A

Edgar Osuna made quite an impression in his first two starts after being promoted from Myrtle Beach. The lefthander allowed only one hit in seven scoreless innings and retired the last 13 batters he faced to win

his Double-A debut, 4-0, over West Tenn on June 4. "He really knows how to pitch, and he has great command," Wellman said. "When you have that kind of package, that can be hard to beat." In his second start, on June 9 at Mobile, Osuna improved to 2-0 by limiting the BayBears to one run and four hits over seven innings...

Osuna's Southern League debut was part of a stellar pitching effort by the M-Braves' staff. Mississippi surrendered only one run over 37 innings and none over the last 20 innings of the June 1-4 series with the Diamond Jaxx...

Kyle Cofield allowed only 44 hits in his first 58 2/3 innings and limited opposing hitters to a .209 batting average through June 10. On June 2, Cofield had a complete-game shutout versus West Tenn and retired 16 consecutive batters at one point. The righthander, however, has an average of 6.4 walks per nine innings...

Wellman said the biggest loss associated with centerfielder **Gorkys Hernandez** being part of the trade with Pittsburgh for McLouth, was the speed he brought to the lineup. "We got slower the day that deal was made," Wellman said. "But I believe (going to the Pirates) will be a great opportunity for him to get to the big leagues faster."...

The M-Braves also lost the services of pitchers **Jonny Venters** and **Rafael Cruz** when they were promoted to Gwinnett. Venters had a rough stretch from May 18-29, when he allowed 14 earned runs in 18 innings over three starts, but had six shutout appearances among his other nine outings with Mississippi, leading to a 2.76 ERA. Cruz recorded 12 saves in 15 opportunities with the M-Braves...

Scott Diamond has encountered a bumpier start to the season after going a combined 15-3 last year between Myrtle Beach and Rome. Signed as a non-drafted free agent in 2007, the lefthander has pitched better than his 2-5 record indicates. He won on June 5 for the first time since April 22 despite allowing one run or less in six of his 11 starts, including four of his last five through June 10...

Catcher **J.C. Boscan** was tabbed the Southern League Batter of the Week for May 11-17 after he went 11-for-20 with 10 RBIs in five games, which were part of what proved to be a 13-game hitting streak. Boscan is enjoying his most productive season in his 13-year minor league career and is platooning with Phillip Britton to give the M-Braves one of the most productive catching duos at the Double-A level.

DOWN ON THE FARM

BRETT DEVALL

THE BONE SPUR ISN'T A CONCERN SO FAR

EDITOR'S NOTE

Brett DeVall, a 6-foot-4, 215-pound lefthander, was Atlanta's compensation-round draft choice in 2008, selected with the 40th overall pick. In limited activity for the Gulf Coast Braves last year, he had an 0.93 ERA in four outings. This year at Class-A Rome, the 19-year-old DeVall is 4-2 with a 2.11 ERA through his first eight starts.

IN MY FIRST START here with Rome, I kind of got my feet wet. The second time out, I really felt like I was already in a routine. I've been real happy with the way most of my starts have been going.

I got off to a bit of a slow start by being in Orlando for extended spring training, but it was definitely the right move. I believe the Braves eased me through spring training to make sure everything was good.

The pain that bothered me last year turned out to be a bone spur. Last season in my second outing, about the fourth or fifth inning, I felt that something wasn't right in my arm. It was more in my forearm than my elbow. The Braves believed it was muscular, and I rested it for a while.

In my following outing, I went into the third inning and felt something I had never felt before, so I wound up going to Atlanta and having it checked. The Braves have told me that different pitchers pitch differently with a bone spur. The big thing I have to do is keep my arm in shape and make certain I'm strengthening everything. So far, it hasn't bothered me at all since I've been at Rome.

My first year in pro ball has brought about a little bit of everything. Going into the draft, I heard a lot of things from a lot of different scouts. Everything worked out great when the Braves called my name in the first round.

> "I GOT OFF TO A BIT OF A SLOW START BY BEING IN ORLANDO FOR EXTENDED SPRING TRAINING, BUT IT WAS DEFINITELY THE RIGHT MOVE."

I pitched in the East Cobb league outside of Atlanta during the summers when I was in high school, and most of those fans are Atlanta Braves fans. I got a lot of calls and mail from many of those people saying how happy they were I was with the Braves.

A lot of people have asked me about being a first-round pick, but my attitude is you set that aside and just go out and play ball and try to do the best you can.

When I went to the GCL, that wasn't the most exciting thing I've ever done. It wasn't bad, and it definitely could have been worse. I enjoyed going out there with a good group of guys and focusing solely on my pitching until the bone spur situation started to act up. But without any fans at the games, and all of the heat while playing in the middle of the day, it was a little difficult to get used to.

This year, being here at Rome has been awesome. It definitely feels like professional baseball, which is a great thing. I love being a part of the entire process. Being here with so many guys who were also drafted last year, as well as a few other young guys, particularly Randall Delgado, it brings about a certain type of friendly competition to the rotation.

I believe we have the youngest staff in the South Atlantic League, and there are even more young guys who will be up here in the near future. It's a lot of fun being part of such a good staff and seeing how the other teams react when we replace a great pitcher with another one.

All of my pitches feel good right now. I'm pleased with my fastball, and my changeup is definitely the pitch that has been working best. We threw away the slider and have gone with more of a curveball. The curveball is a work in progress, but it's getting some outs. I've been able to throw it in there for some strikes, which keeps the hitters off-guard once they realize I have it.

Right now, the big thing I'm working on is the consistency of all my pitches. If I continue to improve in that area, I feel I'll keep heading in the right direction.

Through June 10, the two catchers had a combined batting average of .328...

Second baseman **Travis Jones** missed nine days while on the disabled list in May and struggled to find his groove upon returning to the lineup on May 23. Hitting .315 when sidelined, Jones went 13-for-62 (.210) through June 10, which caused his average to fall to .272...

The rest of the M-Braves' infield was also struggling at the plate. First baseman **Kala Ka'aihue** owned a .173 batting average through June 10 and had not been at the .200 level since May 11. Shortstop **Brandon Hicks** batted .146 in the first 10 games of June to fall to .217, while third baseman **Eric Campbell** opened June with a .111 average to fall to .244.

MYRTLE BEACH
ADVANCED A

One of the Braves' best stories of the first two-plus months of the season is the development of **Cody Johnson**. The leftfielder continues to hit for impressive power, and ranked among the minor league leaders with 18 home runs through June 10. He also has made steady improvement in using the entire field instead of trying to pull every pitch, and is making strides with his defense. "I've been seeing the ball well for most of the season," Johnson said. "When I'm seeing the ball and putting the barrel of the bat on the ball, I have a good chance of hitting for power." Manager **Rocket Wheeler** describes Johnson's approach at the plate as "feast or famine," adding, "When he makes contact and puts the barrel on the ball, the ball jumps off his bat. I've been around this game awhile, and for a young kid to have that kind of raw power, that's probably the most I've seen. He's just got to cut down on the strikeouts, but he's working at it."...

Johnson and fellow outfielder **Jason Heyward** were named to the Carolina League All-Star team. Johnson was the designated hitter, while Heyward was given the start in right field. Heyward is in the top 10 in the league with his .295 average and has also hit nine home runs and driven in 22 runs. Heyward was sidelined from May 26 through the first 10 days of June after tweaking an oblique muscle. Bothered with a hip flexor injury earlier in the season, Heyward earned Carolina League Batter of the Week honors for May 11-17...

Wheeler was named manager of the Carolina League All-Star team for its annual game with the California League... Third baseman **Donell Linares** was named the Carolina League's top hitter for the week of May 25-31. Linares hit .426 (12-for-26) with four runs scored, a double, a triple and eight RBIs while striking out only twice for the week. Signed last summer after defecting from Cuba, Linares is considered one of the league's top defensive players at third, in addition to providing above-average offense at the position...

Pitcher **Erik Cordier** got some revenge versus his former organization (Kansas City) by limiting Wilmington to one run over 6 1/3 innings on May 31 to even his record at 2-2. Cordier, who was traded to the Atlanta organization in exchange for shortstop Tony Pena, Jr., in the spring of 2007, is having his first extended stretch of success with the Braves by keeping his pitches at the knees and below...

Pitcher **Richard Sullivan**, who gave up four earned runs in each of his first three starts after being promoted from Class A Rome, surrendered only seven earned runs over his next four appearances, a span of 26.2 innings, from May 21-June 7. On May 27, the lefthander tossed a complete game three-hit shutout with nine strikeouts versus Winston-Salem.

ROME
CLASS A

Pitcher **Zeke Spruill**, catcher **Jesus Sucre** and outfielder **Luis Sumoza** were selected to the Southern Division roster for the South Atlantic League All-Star Game. Spruill, who was placed on the disabled list June 9 after getting off to a 7-2 start with a 3.17 ERA, has ranked among the league leaders in wins and innings throughout the first half. Sucre hit .389 in May to emerge with a team-best .324 batting average, including .515 (17-for-33) from May 24-June 1. Sumoza, who was acquired from Boston last year in exchange for outfielder Mark Kotsay, has led Rome in hits and doubles, and put together a 15-game hitting streak from May 9-25...

The R-Braves' pitching staff underwent a major overall on June 5 when **Jacob Thompson**, **David Francis** and **Jaye Chapman** were promoted to Myrtle Beach. Taking their place on the Rome roster were pitchers **Dimasther Delgado**, **Casey Hodges** and **Matthew Small**. Francis returned to the team after tossing three innings with the Pelicans when Spruill was placed on the disabled list...

Righthander **Randall Delgado** has struggled during his first full season in the U.S., but the Braves expected the 19-year-old to experience some ups and downs. His fastball has been touching 94 mph and has shown flashes of being overpowering...

Catcher **Braeden Schlehuber** was hitting .206 through June 3 before going 9-for-24 with two doubles, two homers and six RBIs over his next six games. While his hitting is starting to blossom, Schlehuber has shown excellent defensive skills behind the plate and caught 10 of 29 would-be base stealers.

ORGANIZATIONAL

The Braves released pitchers **Manuel Vega**, **Carlos Rivas** and **Travis Wilson**... Most of the players in extended spring training were given a week off in early June prior to making their final preparations for the short-season leagues in Danville, Va., and Orlando. The Appalachian and Gulf Coast leagues were to start playing games on June 23...

Lance Niekro spent all of extended spring training making solid progress in his transformation from a first baseman to a knuckleball pitcher, like his late father, Joe, and uncle, Phil. Niekro, who played in the major leagues for San Francisco as recently as 2007, was expected to open the season in the GCL.

PROSPECTS BY POSITION

C	**BRAEDEN SCHLEHUBER** AGE 21, ROME
1B	**FREDDIE FREEMAN** 19, MYRTLE BEACH
2B	**TRAVIS JONES** 23, MISSISSIPPI
3B	**DONELL LINARES** 25, MYRTLE BEACH
SS	**BRANDON HICKS** 23, MISSISSIPPI
LF	**CODY JOHNSON** 20, MYRTLE BEACH
CF	**JORDAN SCHAFER** 22, GWINNETT
RF	**JASON HEYWARD** 19, MYRTLE BEACH
RHP	**ZEKE SPRUILL** 19, ROME
LHP	**BRETT DEVALL** 19, ROME

FARM STATISTICS

GWINNETT 33-28

INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE TRIPLE A | GWINNETT STADIUM (678) 277-0300

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Barton, Brian (OF)	.246	40	130	16	32	2	3	3	13	16	36	6
Blanco, Gregor (OF)	.242	48	190	33	46	6	1	1	16	27	38	6
Borchard, Joe (OF)	.119	12	42	5	5	1	0	1	5	6	14	0
Boscan, J.C. (C)	.250	13	44	5	11	4	0	0	2	2	9	0
Canizares, Barbaro (1B)	.344	58	227	33	78	17	1	8	37	24	28	1
Colina, Alvin (C)	.257	28	101	11	26	9	0	2	17	10	22	1
Conrad, Brooks (INF)	.265	54	196	36	52	11	0	8	32	30	49	7
Gorecki, Reid (OF)	.244	50	160	19	39	7	0	4	18	13	28	8
Hernandez, Diory (SS)	.355	29	110	11	39	12	0	0	20	10	10	5
Holt, J.C. (2B/OF)	.248	44	161	22	40	7	2	0	21	13	32	5
Jones, Brandon (OF)	.305	40	128	14	39	8	0	0	18	19	27	3
Perez, Antonio (SS)	.192	18	52	7	10	1	1	1	4	6	11	2
Pope, Van (3B)	.184	48	163	19	30	12	0	2	16	16	33	1
Sammons, Clint (C)	.243	27	103	9	25	6	0	3	20	4	22	1
Schafer, Jordan (OF)	.308	3	13	5	4	0	0	1	2	2	3	1
Timmons, Wes (INF)	.279	53	136	27	38	10	1	0	13	28	15	7

PITCHERS	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Acosta, Manny	1-3	2.86	15	0	0	22.0	18	7	7	10	18	.220
Armas, Tony	0-0	3.16	6	5	0	25.2	23	14	9	9	17	.240
Bueno, Francisley	3-1	3.50	20	2	1	36.0	31	15	14	16	24	.231
Cruz, Rafael	0-1	0.00	5	0	1	5.1	4	1	0	1	3	.235
Gamble, Jerome	1-3	5.60	6	4	0	17.2	25	24	11	13	17	.329
Gomez, Mariano	3-1	1.67	21	0	4	37.2	21	7	7	16	19	.167
Hanson, Tommy	3-3	1.49	11	11	0	66.1	40	16	11	17	90	.169
Heath, Deunte	0-0	10.13	2	2	0	8.0	11	10	9	9	7	.314
Logan, Boone	3-2	3.86	24	0	0	30.1	26	14	13	15	32	.236
Medlen, Kris	5-0	1.19	8	6	0	37.2	20	5	5	10	44	.157
Nunez, Vladimir	2-2	2.31	17	2	0	35.0	29	10	9	21	30	.223
Parr, James	0-1	7.30	3	3	0	12.1	15	10	10	4	14	.313
Perez, Juan	0-1	1.54	18	0	0	23.1	14	5	4	12	27	.165
Redmond, Todd	3-4	4.19	12	11	0	62.1	68	34	29	17	48	.272
Valdez, Luis	1-2	3.09	24	0	10	32.0	31	21	11	11	33	.246

MISSISSIPPI 30-31

SOUTHERN LEAGUE DOUBLE A | TRUSTMARK PARK (601) 664-7600

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Boscan, J.C. (C)	.354	32	113	12	40	8	0	0	17	13	23	1
Britton, Phillip (C)	.270	24	74	6	20	6	0	0	8	5	15	1
Cabrera, Willie (OF)	.239	46	163	14	39	7	0	4	23	14	27	1
Camarena, Jose (C)	.167	12	36	1	6	2	0	0	1	2	4	1
Campbell, Eric (3B)	.246	53	183	12	45	10	0	3	19	18	30	0
Creek, Greg (1B)	.218	40	119	9	26	4	1	4	16	11	28	0
Guzman, Javier (2B)	.087	12	23	3	2	0	0	0	0	1	4	0
Hicks, Brandon (SS)	.218	57	206	24	45	9	1	3	19	15	61	8
Jones, Travis (2B)	.271	50	155	19	42	8	1	3	16	20	37	11
Ka'aihue, Kala (1B)	.169	49	136	15	23	4	1	4	13	27	40	0
Kirkland, Kody (INF)	.190	38	100	15	19	6	1	2	8	10	23	1
Perez, Antonio (2B)	.333	3	12	3	4	0	0	1	1	0	3	0
Rodriguez, Concepcion (OF)	.256	51	156	14	40	5	0	2	15	9	30	4
Young, Matt (OF)	.255	61	204	35	52	11	2	1	17	40	34	17

PITCHERS	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Butts, Brett	3-0	2.30	24	0	2	31.1	29	10	8	9	31	.254
Cofield, Kyle	4-2	3.22	11	9	0	58.2	44	25	21	42	37	.209
Cruz, Rafael	0-2	4.76	22	0	12	22.2	27	13	12	8	20	.290
Darrow, Rudy	1-0	9.31	9	0	0	9.2	11	11	10	10	9	.289
Diamond, Scott	2-6	3.72	12	12	0	67.2	79	35	28	28	52	.292
Dumesnil, Bryan	1-4	3.03	23	0	0	29.2	24	11	10	16	34	.224
Gamble, Jerome	1-0	2.79	9	1	1	19.1	15	6	6	9	16	.221
Gunderson, Kevin	1-1	1.75	22	0	2	25.2	19	5	5	9	24	.207
Gustafson, Tim	0-0	0.00	2	0	0	4.0	1	0	0	4	4	.077
Heath, Deunte	2-3	3.47	10	10	0	57.0	57	28	22	28	48	.260
Lyman, Jeff	4-4	3.44	16	2	0	36.2	33	17	14	16	33	.239
Marek, Stephen	2-3	6.35	22	0	1	22.2	24	19	16	19	17	.276
Osuna, Edgar	2-0	0.64	2	2	0	14.0	5	1	1	6	6	.111
Reynoso, Ryne	3-2	3.32	11	10	0	59.2	50	25	22	25	40	.225
Venters, Jonny	4-4	2.76	12	12	0	65.1	60	24	20	35	40	.251

MYRTLE BEACH 21-36

CAROLINA LEAGUE ADVANCED A | BB&T COASTAL FIELD (843) 918-6002

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Davis, Quentin (OF)	.227	17	66	8	15	2	2	0	3	4	11	1
Fisher, Michael (2B)	.223	43	166	16	37	6	0	1	13	8	41	2
Freeman, Frederick (1B)	.291	52	189	28	55	13	0	4	27	15	28	1
Gress, Randy (SS)	.152	17	46	4	7	2	0	0	2	5	15	0
Heyward, Jason (OF)	.295	37	139	26	41	10	0	9	22	16	24	4
Johnson, Benji (C)	.202	29	84	7	17	5	0	3	7	9	30	0
Johnson, Cody (OF)	.260	57	196	27	51	12	0	18	42	30	79	4
Kennelly, Mathew (C)	.204	40	137	11	28	4	0	1	6	11	38	0
Lee, C.J. (OF)	.287	31	108	14	31	7	3	0	4	6	27	4
Linares, Donell (3B)	.267	54	206	24	55	11	1	6	38	7	15	2
Lundahl, Chad (SS)	.184	34	114	8	21	8	0	0	8	3	18	0
Marcial, Robert (SS/2B)	.204	35	113	12	23	1	0	1	8	7	33	1
Miles, Cole (OF)	.234	47	154	26	36	1	1	1	10	16	32	6
Owings, Jon (OF)	.183	33	115	10	21	5	2	2	8	8	36	1
Shults, Stephen (1B/OF)	.235	6	17	0	4	1	0	0	4	2	6	0

PITCHERS	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Barrett, Eric	1-2	3.05	14	0	0	20.2	16	7	7	11	20	.219
Broadway, Michael	0-5	7.06	14	0	0	21.2	28	19	17	18	13	.329
Chapman, Jaye	0-0	6.59	12	0	0	13.2	18	11	10	8	14	.321
Cordier, Erik	2-2	2.86	9	9	0	34.2	34	14	11	19	29	.266
Gearrin, Cory	0-0	0.64	12	0	9	14.0	8	1	1	1	16	.160
Gustafson, Tim	0-0	2.03	10	0	0	13.1	15	7	3	7	8	.278
Hyde, Lee	2-0	1.80	7	0	0	10.0	6	2	2	4	15	.171
Mehlich, Michael	1-2	7.45	14	0	2	19.1	19	21	16	16	11	.257
Ortegano, Jose	2-5	4.25	14	6	0	42.1	39	22	20	16	36	.244
Osuna, Edgar	3-4	3.19	10	10	0	53.2	52	23	19	11	37	.246
Palica, Thomas	2-1	4.13	20	0	3	24.0	28	16	11	8	21	.292
Pruneda, Benino	0-1	1.76	12	0	2	15.1	9	3	3	9	19	.167
Rivas, Carlos	2-3	7.52	8	5	0	26.1	33	27	22	16	17	.297
Rohrbough, Cole	3-3	5.12	7	7	0	31.2	41	18	18	12	30	.315
Sullivan, Richard	2-2	3.74	7	7	0	45.2	37	22	19	14	34	.222
Wilson, Tyler	0-2	4.58	15	0	0	17.2	12	11	9	14	15	.190

ROME 32-28

SOUTH ATLANTIC LEAGUE CLASS A | STATE MUTUAL STADIUM (706) 368-9388

BATTER	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SB
Barba, Ryan (SS)	.216	55	176	18	38	7	0	2	21	14	36	3
Campusano, Yoel (2B)	.275	32	120	14	33	7	1	2	10	4	19	2
Culver, Calvin (OF)	.296	20	71	10	21	6	0	2	6	4	14	1
Fuller, Chais (INF)	.161	29	87	7	14	3	1	0	4	7	23	1
Lee, C.J. (OF)	.239	14	46	4	11	2	0	0	5	3	11	1
Maddox, Craig (DH)	.231	11	39	2	9	0	0	0	1	1	15	1
Moody, Shayne (2B)	.228	16	57	3	13	1	0	0	5	1	7	2
Rodriguez, Gerardo (1B)	.268	55	209	26	56	9	5	10	35	11	61	3
Santamaria, Jahdiel (OF)	.281	32	114	18	32	3	1	0	7	6	18	5
Schlehuber, Braeden (C)	.233	48	159	20	37	14	0	3	16	10	31	3
Shehan, Chris (OF)	.219	41	128	16	28	4	1	1	9	12	35	3
Shults, Stephen (3B/OF)	.200	37	130	15	26	9	0	3	11	8	42	1
Sime, Samuel (3B)	.250	50	176	26	44	9	2	2	13	10	33	4
Sucre, Jesus (C)	.329	38	140	13	46	13	0	1	16	5	12	1
Sumoza, Luis (OF)	.263	59	228	24	60	13	2	2	20	17	48	5
Ware, L.V. (OF)	.130	17	46	5	6	0	1	1	5	2	14	3

PITCHERS	W-L	ERA	G	GS	SV	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	OBA
Beachy, Brandon	0-0	5.60	12	0	0	17.2	20	11	11	4	17	.290
Castro, Yeliar	2-3	4.50	15	0	0	28.0	24	16	14	14	31	.242
Chapman, Jaye	0-0	1.17	8	0	6	7.2	4	3	1	3	13	.138
Clemens, Paul	2-3	5.44	12	5	3	41.1	52	27	25	19	31	.297
Delgado, Dimaster	0-0	1.08	2	2	0	8.1	5	1	1	4	11	.172
Delgado, Randall	1-6	6.18	9	9	0	39.1	44	29	27	23	42	.289
DeVall, Brett	4-2	2.11	8	8	0	42.2	34	11	10	10	30	.214
Francis, David	3-2	2.79	12	2	0	38.2	40	14	12	14	37	.274
Hoover, J.J.	2-2	3.14	11	6	1	51.2	53	22	18	6	54	.256
Kimbrel, Craig	0-0	1.20	12	0	8	15.0	8	2	2	4	30	.157
McMillan, Clayton	1-0	1.88	15	0	0	14.1	16	3	3	5	12	.286
Paulino, Angelo	3-1	3.28	15	0	0	24.2	21	10	9	10	31	.221
Pruneda, Benino	0-0	0.00	8	0	6	8.0	2	0	0	1	13	.080
Spruill, Ezekiel	7-2	3.17	11	10	1	65.1	70	29	23	11	47	.271
Sullivan, Richard	4-1	3.72	5	5	0	29.0	37	18	12	5	27	.306
Thompson, Jacob	2-5	5.20	11	11	0	64.0	74	41	37	14	41	.298

FS SOUTH — FSS

Peachtree TV — PTV

SPORTSOUTH — SPSO

ALL GAMES ON WGST-AM (640), 96.1-FM, AND BRAVES RADIO NETWORK AFFILIATES

2009 SCHEDULE

JUNE/JULY

Braves — HOME — AWAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
28 1:30 PM FSS/TBS BOS	29	30 7:00 PM PTV PHI	1 7:00 PM PTV PHI	2 7:00 PM SPSO PHI	3 6:30 PM SPSO WAS	4 1:00 PM SPSO WAS
5 1:30 PM FSS WAS	6 8:00 PM CHC	7 8:00 PM SPSO CHC	8 2:00 PM SPSO CHC	9 8:30 PM SPSO COL	10 9:00 PM SPSO COL	11 8:00 PM SPSO COL
12 3:00 PM FSS COL	13	14 8:00 PM ST. LOUIS ALL-STAR GAME FOX	15	16 7:00 PM SPSO NYM	17 7:30 PM PTV NYM	18 4:00 PM FOX NYM
19 6:00 PM ESPN NYM	20 7:00 PM SPSO SF	21 7:00 PM PTV SF	22 7:00 PM PTV SF	23 1:00 PM SPSO SF	24 8:00 PM SPSO MIL	25 7:00 PM SPSO MIL
26 2:00 PM FSS MIL	27	28 7:00 PM SPSO FLA	29 7:00 PM SPSO FLA	30 7:00 PM SPSO FLA	31 7:30 PM PTV LA	

AUGUST

Braves — HOME — AWAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 4:00 PM FOX LA
2 1:30 PM FSS LA	3 10:00 PM SPSO SD	4 10:00 PM SPSO SD	5 3:30 PM SPSO SD	6 10:00 PM SPSO LA	7 10:00 PM SPSO LA	8 10:00 PM SPSO LA
9 4:00 PM FSS LA	10	11 7:00 PM PTV WAS	12 7:00 PM SPSO WAS	13	14 7:30 PM PTV PHI	15 4:00 PM FOX PHI
16 1:30 PM FSS PHI	17 4:00 PM FSS ARI	18 7:00 PM SPSO NYM	19 7:00 PM SPSO NYM	20 7:00 PM SPSO NYM	21 7:30 PM PTV FLA	22 7:00 PM PTV FLA
23 1:30 PM FSS FLA	24	25 7:00 PM SPSO SD	26 7:00 PM SPSO SD	27 7:00 PM SPSO SD	28 7:00 PM SPSO PHI	29 7:00 PM SPSO PHI
30 1:30 PM FSS PHI	31 7:00 PM SPSO FLA					

SEPTEMBER

Braves — HOME — AWAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 7:00 PM SPSO FLA	2 7:00 PM SPSO FLA	3 7:00 PM SPSO FLA	4 7:30 PM SPSO CIN	5 7:00 PM SPSO CIN
6 1:30 PM FSS CIN	7	8 8:00 PM SPSO HOU	9 8:00 PM SPSO HOU	10 8:00 PM SPSO HOU	11 8:00 PM SPSO STL	12 4:00 PM FOX STL
13 2:00 PM FSS STL	14	15 7:00 PM PTV NYM	16 7:00 PM PTV NYM	17 7:00 PM SPSO NYM	18 7:30 PM PTV PHI	19 7:00 PM PTV PHI
20 1:30 PM FSS PHI	21 7:00 PM SPSO NYM	22 7:00 PM SPSO NYM	23 7:00 PM NYM	24	25 7:00 PM SPSO WAS	26 1:00 PM SPSO WAS
27 1:30 PM FSS WAS	28 7:00 PM SPSO FLA	29 7:00 PM SPSO FLA	30 7:00 PM SPSO FLA			

Post-Season Dates Are Tentative, Unofficial and Subject To Change.

OCT./NOV.

National League Division Series | National League Championship Series | World Series

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1 7:00 PM WAS SPSO	2 7:30 PM WAS SPSO	3 7:00 PM WAS SPSO
4 1:30 PM WAS FSS	5	6	7 NLDS	8 NLDS	9 NLDS	10 NLDS
11 NLDS	12 NLDS	13 NLCS	14	15 NLCS	16 NLCS	17 NLCS
18 NLCS	19 NLCS	20 NLCS	21 NLCS	22 NLCS	23 NLCS	24 NLCS
25	26	27	28 WS FOX	29 WS FOX	30	31 WS FOX
1 WS FOX	2 WS* FOX	3	4 WS* FOX	5 WS* FOX		

* If necessary

World Series home field advantage (Games 1, 2, 6 and 7) is awarded to the team representing the league that won the All-Star Game.

FS SOUTH — FSS

Peachtree TV — PTV

SPORTSOUTH — SPSO

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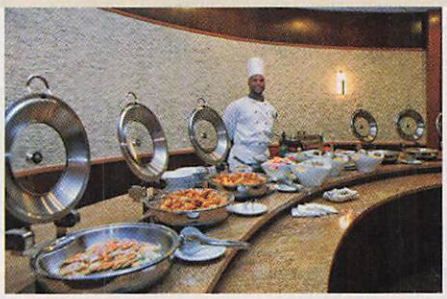

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Single game tickets are available at braves.com/tickets, the Braves box office at Turner Field, by calling 1-800-326-4000, and at all TicketMaster outlets.

LOCATION	PRICE	PREMIUM#	SEASON+
Skyline@	$1	$1	NA
Upper Pavilion	$6	$6	$3
Upper Reserved	$8	$12	NA
Upper Box	$12	$16	$10
Field/Terrace Pavilion	$22	$26	$12
Terrace Reserved	$24	$28	$22
Field Reserved	$26	$30	$24
Club Pavilion	$28	$32	$26
Terrace Level	$36	$40	$30
Field Level	$36	$40	$30
Club Level	$38	$42	$34
Dugout Level	$60	$64	$52
Henry Aaron Seats	$70	$74	$60

All Friday and Saturday regular season games.
+ Season ticket price per game.
@ Available 3 hours before game at Turner Field box office.

GROUP TICKETS

Per ticket discounts are available to groups of 20 or more.
Call (404) 577-9100 for information.

FLEX PLANS

Priced as low as $99 (9 games/upper box location). Pick as few as 9 games and save up to $6 per ticket. Exchange tickets up to 24 hours prior to start of any game in your plan.

Location	Regular/Premium	Flex Price	Yankees/Red Sox	Flex Price
Golden Moon Casino	$38/$42	$37	$48	$42
Terrace	$36/$40	$35	$46	$40
Field Level	$36/$40	$35	$46	$40
Field/Terrace Pavilion	$22/$26	$21	$32	$26
Upper Box	$12/$16	$11	$22	$16

4-GAME PACKS

TERRACE $140
OUTFIELD PAVILION $84
UPPER BOX $44

NL EAST

July 17 vs. Mets, Aug. 21 vs. Marlins, Sept. 19 vs. Phillies, Oct. 3 vs. Nats

TERRACE $145
OUTFIELD PAVILION $89
UPPER BOX $49

SUNDAY PACKAGE

June 28 vs. Red Sox, July 19 vs. Mets, Aug. 2 vs. Dodgers, Sept. 6 vs. Reds

EAST COAST FIREWORKS

June 26 vs. Red Sox, Aug. 14 vs. Phillies, Sept. 18 vs. Phillies, Oct. 2 vs. Nats

GWINNETT BRAVES PACKAGE

July 2 Phillies vs. Atlanta $13 (Field Reserved)
July 4 Norfolk vs. Gwinnett $9 (Field Box)
Aug. 2 Dodgers vs. Atlanta $13 (Field Reserved)
Aug. 22 Charlotte vs. Gwinnett $9 (Field Box)

HALL OF FAME PACK

(Game Of Your Choice)

As Low As $26 - 47 Percent Off Retail Price
One Outfield Pavilion Ticket
One Braves Replica Cap
One Braves Museum Admission Ticket

PRORATED PACKAGES

Season Tickets and Weekend Season Tickets

Call (404) 577-9100 To Inquire About Prorated Pricing, Including The $5 Upper Box Special.

TICKET SPECIALS

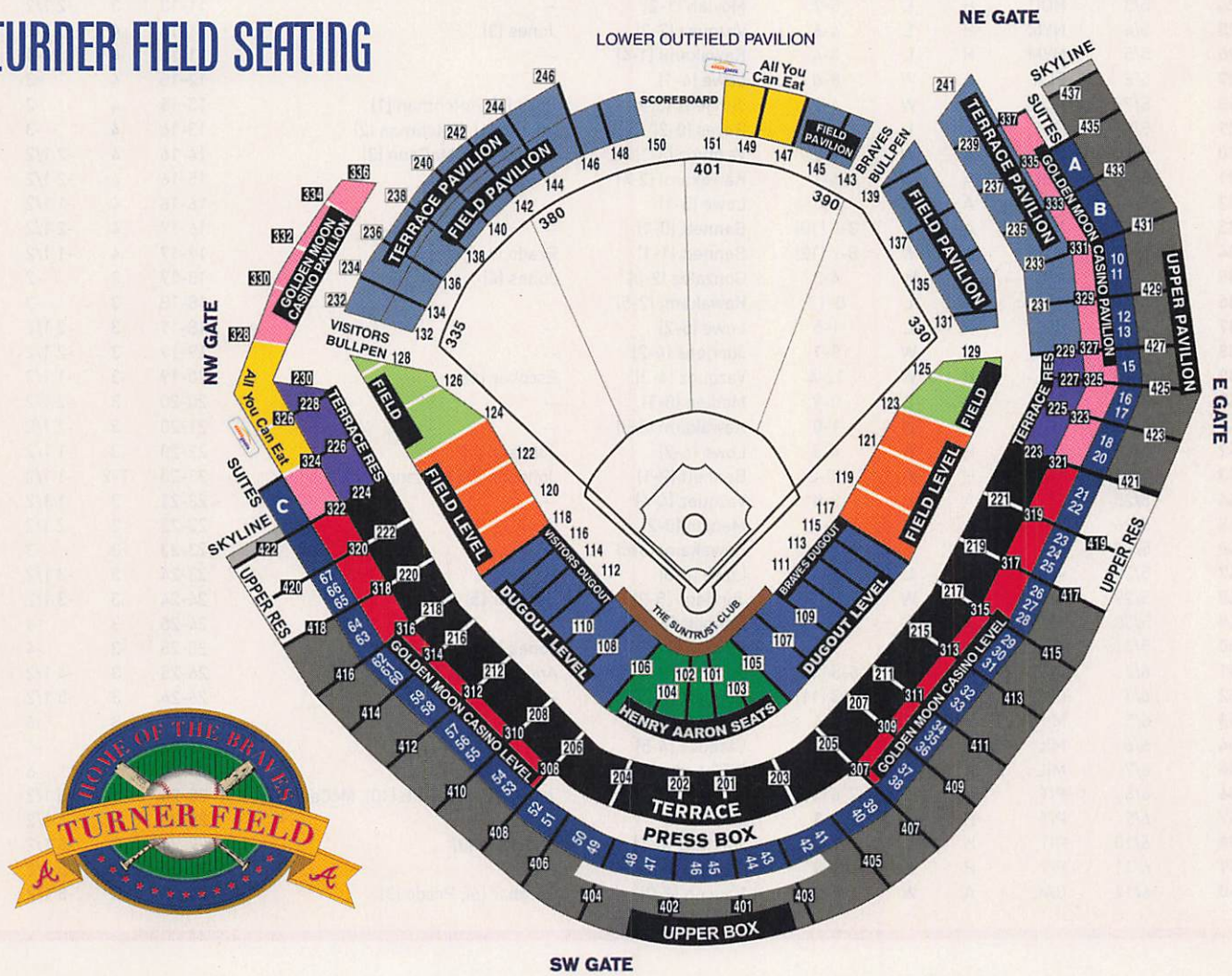
* $1 Skyline Seats – Available three hours before every game at the Turner Field Box Office.
* Chevron Family Value Plan - 4 tickets, 4 hotdogs, 4 Cokes, a Braves yearbook, a parking pass and a $5 gas card for as low as $59 (37 percent savings), available Sunday through Thursday (Friday/Saturday games are an extra $20 per pack; seats are Upper Box; upgrade available for additional charge).
* Coca-Cola Two-For-One Tuesdays – Two Upper Reserved tickets for the price of one every Tuesday.
* Two-For-One Wednesdays – Two Field/Terrace Pavilion tickets for the price of one every Wednesday.
* ampm All You Can Eat Seats – For as low as $45, enjoy all the peanuts and crackerjacks, hotdogs, hamburgers, sodas, and more, for one low all-inclusive price.
* College, Military, and AAA Discount – Two Upper Box tickets for the price of one with a valid college or military ID or valid AAA member card (excluding June 23-28).
* Ultimate Kids Days – Tickets for all fans 14 and under are $5 on Sunday, Aug. 2. Young fans can also participate in pre-game parades around the field and be eligible to win several special experiences, including serving at the team's Honorary Team Captain or Guest Public Address Announcer.
* Publix Friday Night Fireworks (every Friday home game).
* All-Star Sundays (every Sunday home game): Kids run the bases, and Braves alumni autograph signings.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU

The Braves are offering all fans a birthday present - a free ticket to a game at Turner Field. Fans can go to braves.com/birthday to register for their free ticket to a game. See the following chart for the month in which you qualify for a ticket.

BIRTH MONTH	FREE TICKET
April or October	April, May, October
May or November	May
June or December	June
July or January	July
August or February	August
September or March	September

TURNER FIELD SEATING



BY GAME

GAME	DATE	OPP	H/A	W-L	SCORE	W/L PITCHER	ATL HRs	REC	POS	GB
1	4/5	PHI	A	W	4-1	Lowe (1-0)	McCann (1), Francoeur (1), Schafer (1)	1-0	1	+1/2
2	4/7	PHI	A	W	4-0	Jurrjens (1-0)	Johnson (1), Jones (1)	2-0	T-1	—
3	4/8	PHI	A	L	11-12	Boyer (0-1)	McCann (2), Schafer (2), Diaz (1)	2-1	3	-1
4	4/10	WAS	H	W	6-5 (10)	Campillo (1-0)	Escobar (1)	3-1	2	-1
5	4/11	WAS	H	W	5-3	Kawakami (1-0)	Johnson (2)	4-1	T-1	—
6	4/12	WAS	H	W	8-5	Jurrjens (2-0)	—	5-1	T-1	—
7	4/14	FLA	H	L	1-5	Vazquez (0-1)	Johnson (3)	5-2	2	-1
8	4/15	FLA	H	L	4-10	Moylan (0-1)	--	5-3	2	-2
9	4/16	FLA	H	L	2-6	Kawakami (1-1)	--	5-4	2	-3
10	4/17	PIT	A	L	0-3	Jurrjens (2-1)	--	5-5	T-2	-4
11	4/18	PIT	A	L	0-10	Reyes (0-1)	--	5-6	3	-5
12	4/19	PIT	A	W	11-1	Vazquez (1-1)	Prado (1), Ross (1)	6-6	T-2	-5
13	4/20	WAS	A	L	2-3	Lowe (1-1)	Diaz (2)	6-7	3	-5
14	4/21	WAS	A	L	3-4	Kawakami (1-2)	--	6-8	4	-5
15	4/22	WAS	A	W	1-0	Gonzalez (1-0)	--	7-8	2	-4
16	4/24	CIN	A	W	4-3	Vazquez (2-1)	Francoeur (2)	8-8	2	-3
17	4/25	CIN	A	W	10-2	Lowe (2-1)	Jones (2), Escobar (2)	9-8	2	-2
18	4/26	CIN	A	L	2-8	Kawakami (1-3)	Ross (2)	9-9	3	-2
19	4/27	STL	H	L	2-3	Jurrjens (2-2)	--	9-10	T-3	-2
20	4/28	STL	H	W	2-1	Moylan (1-1)	--	10-10	3	-2
21	4/29	STL	H	L	3-5	Vazquez (2-2)	--	10-11	3	-3
22	5/1	HOU	H	W	7-2	Lowe (3-1)	Francoeur (3)	11-11	3	-2 1/2
23	5/2	HOU	H	L	1-5	Carlyle (0-1)	--	11-12	3	-2 1/2
24	5/3	HOU	H	L	5-7	Moylan (1-2)	--	11-13	3	-2 1/2
25	5/4	NYM	H	L	4-6	Vazquez (2-3)	Jones (3)	11-14	4	-3 1/2
26	5/5	NYM	H	L	3-4	Kawakami (1-4)	--	11-15	4	-4
27	5/6	FLA	A	W	8-6	Lowe (4-1)	--	12-15	4	-3
28	5/7	FLA	A	W	4-2	Jurrjens (3-2)	Ross (3), Kotchman (1)	13-15	4	-2
29	5/8	PHI	A	L	6-10	Reyes (0-2)	Infante (1), Kotchman (2)	13-16	4	-3
30	5/9	PHI	A	W	6-2	Vazquez (3-3)	Escobar (3), McCann (3)	14-16	4	-2 1/2
31	5/10	PHI	A	W	4-2	Kawakami (2-4)	--	15-16	4	-2 1/2
32	5/11	NYM	A	W	8-3	Lowe (5-1)	--	16-16	4	-1 1/2
33	5/12	NYM	A	L	3-4 (10)	Bennett (0-1)	--	16-17	4	-2 1/2
34	5/13	NYM	A	W	8-7 (12)	Bennett (1-1)	Prado (2)	17-17	4	-1 1/2
35	5/15	ARZ	H	W	4-3	Gonzalez (2-0)	Jones (4)	18-17	3	-2
36	5/16	ARZ	H	L	0-12	Kawakami (2-5)	--	18-18	3	-3
37	5/18	COL	H	L	1-5	Lowe (5-2)	--	18-19	3	-2 1/2
38	5/19	COL	H	W	8-1	Jurrjens (4-2)	--	19-19	3	-2 1/2
39	5/20	COL	H	W	12-4	Vazquez (4-3)	Escobar (4)	20-19	3	-1 1/2
40	5/21	COL	H	L	0-9	Medlen (0-1)	--	20-20	3	-2 1/2
41	5/22	TOR	H	W	1-0	Kawakami (3-5)	--	21-20	3	-2 1/2
42	5/23	TOR	H	W	4-3	Lowe (6-2)	Johnson (4)	22-20	3	-1 1/2
43	5/24	TOR	H	W	10-2	Bennett (2-1)	Johnson (5), McCann 2 (5)	23-20	T-2	-1 1/2
44	5/25	SF	A	L	2-8	Vazquez (4-4)	--	23-21	3	-1 1/2
45	5/26	SF	A	L	0-4	Medlen (0-2)	--	23-22	3	-2 1/2
46	5/27	SF	A	L	3-6	Kawakami (3-6)	--	23-23	3	-3
47	5/28	ARZ	A	L	2-5	Lowe (6-3)	--	23-24	3	-3 1/2
48	5/29	ARZ	A	W	10-6	Jurrjens (5-2)	Escobar (5)	24-24	3	-3 1/2
49	5/30	ARZ	A	L	2-3 (11)	Bennett (2-2)	--	24-25	3	-4
50	5/31	ARZ	A	W	9-3	Medlen (1-2)	Jones (5), Anderson (1)	25-25	3	-4
51	6/2	CHC	H	W	6-5 (12)	Soriano (1-0)	Anderson (2), Francoeur (4)	26-25	3	-4 1/2
52	6/3	CHC	H	L	2-3 (11)	Bennett (2-2)	--	26-26	3	-5 1/2
53	6/5	MIL	H	L	0-4	Jurrjens (5-3)	--	26-27	3	-6
54	6/6	MIL	H	L	0-3	Vazquez (4-5)	--	26-28	3	-6
55	6/7	MIL	H	W	8-7	O'Flaherty (1-0)	Jones 2 (7)	27-28	3	-6
56	6/8	PIT	H	W	7-6 (15)	Medlen (2-2)	Jones (8), McLouth (10), McCann (6)	28-28	3	-5 1/2
57	6/9	PIT	H	W	4-3	Lowe (7-3)	--	29-28	3	-4 1/2
58	6/10	PIT	H	L	2-3	Jurrjens (5-4)	Anderson (3)	29-29	3	-5 1/2
59	6/11	PIT	H	L	1-3	Soriano 1-1)	--	29-30	3	-6 1/2
60	6/12	BAL	A	W	7-2	Hansen (1-0)	Escobar (6), Prado (3)	30-30	3	-5 1/2

INDIVIDUAL STATS

THROUGH 6/11/09

BATTERS	AVG	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	TB	BB	SO	SB	CS	OBP	SLG	E
INFANTE	.349	29	86	13	30	4	0	1	11	37	6	7	1	0	.389	.430	2
JONES	.320	50	169	28	54	9	2	8	31	91	34	28	1	1	.434	.538	9
RIGHT	.364		55		20	5	1	5	16	42	8	10			.438	.764	
LEFT	.298		114		34	4	1	3	15	49	26	18			.433	.430	
McCANN	.312	42	138	17	43	10	1	6	24	73	20	18	2	1	.407	.529	2
JONES, B.	.308	5	13	2	4	0	0	0	1	4	4	3	0	0	.471	.308	0
ESCOBAR	.296	50	206	32	61	14	0	5	31	90	15	24	2	1	.355	.437	8
KOTCHMAN	.277	50	173	15	48	16	0	2	24	70	14	18	0	0	.340	.405	0
DIAZ	.275	38	109	16	30	5	2	2	15	45	11	24	3	0	.350	.413	1
ROSS	.275	24	69	10	19	5	0	3	12	33	13	26	0	0	.390	.478	0
PRADO	.273	38	99	10	27	9	0	2	7	42	9	10	0	1	.333	.424	1
McLOUTH	.255	52	196	32	50	9	1	10	36	91	25	34	9	0	.348	.464	0
ATLANTA	.250	7	28	5	7	2	0	1	2	12	4	5	2	0	.344	.429	0
ANDERSON	.254	40	134	12	34	7	0	3	17	50	8	17	1	0	.288	.373	2
CANIZARES	.250	1	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	0	.250	.250	0
FRANCOEUR	.245	58	220	27	54	5	2	4	26	75	10	33	3	1	.280	.341	0
JOHNSON	.239	53	197	30	47	14	2	5	19	80	15	35	2	2	.299	.406	4
SCHAFER	.204	50	167	18	34	8	0	2	8	48	27	63	2	1	.313	.287	0
SAMMONS	.200	3	5	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	.333	.200	0
HERNANDEZ	.143	10	28	2	4	1	0	0	0	5	1	6	0	0	.172	.179	1
NORTON	.098	48	41	2	4	2	0	0	3	6	9	10	0	0	.275	.146	0
RIGHT	.222		9		2	1	0	0	1	3	1	3			.300	.333	
LEFT	.063		32		2	1	0	0	2	3	8	7			.268	.094	
BLANCO	.000	5	11	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	.083	.000	1
BARTON	.000	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	.000	.000	0
ATLANTA	.256	59	2,013	250	515	114	9	44	237	779	209	376	20	9	.329	.387	36
OPPONENTS	.250	59	2,010	261	503	115	22	37	254	773	200	463	30	23	.323	.385	25

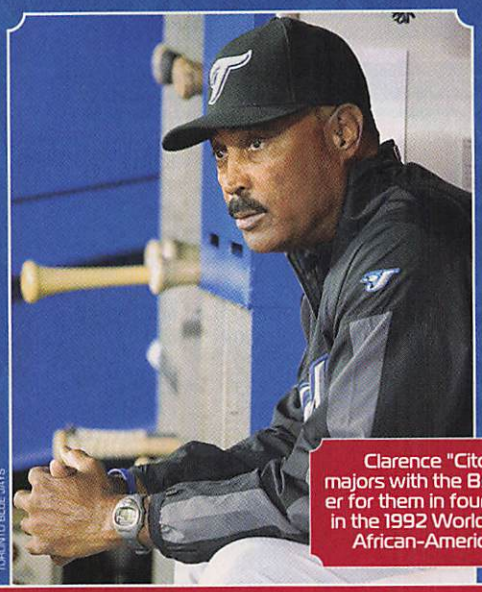
PINCH-HITTERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) **Diaz** (.500-4-0-0), **Jones** (.500-2-0-2), **Johnson** (.500-2-0-1), **Infante** (.400-2-0-1), **Prado** (.375-3-0-2), **McCann** (.250-1-0-1), **Anderson** (.143-1-0-2), **Norton** (.121-4-0-3), **Kawakami** (.000-0-0-0), **Kotchman** (.000-0-0-0), **Hernandez** (.000-0-0-0), **Ross** (.000-0-0-0). **TEAM** (.241-19-0-12).

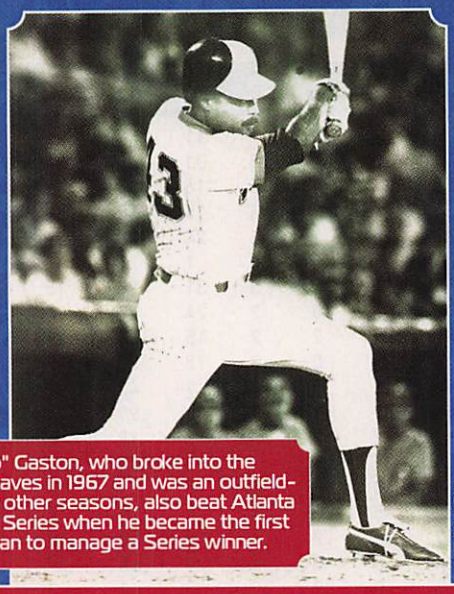
PITCHERS (AVG-H-HR-RBI) **Lowe** (.174-40-1), **Kawakami** (.143-3-0-0), **Jurrjens** (.120-3-0-3), **Reyes** (.111-1-0-0), **Vazquez** (.087-2-0-2), **Medlen** (.000-0-0-0), **Acosta** (.0000-0-0), **Bennett** (.000-0-0-0), **Carlyle** (.000-0-0-0), **Hanson** (.000-0-0-0), **Moylan** (.000-0-0-0), **Parr** (.000-0-0-0). **STAFF** (.112-13-0-6).

KEY

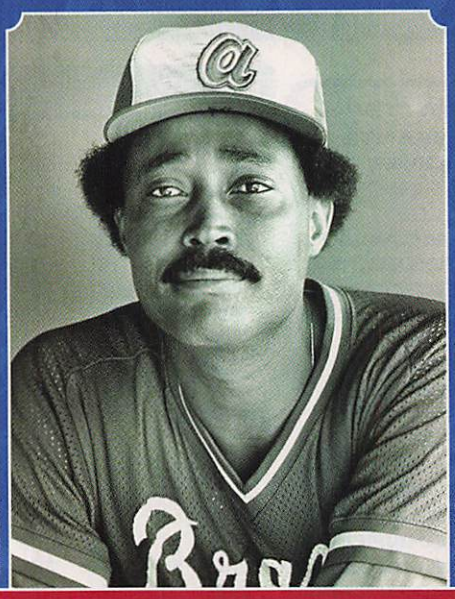
AVG-Batting average, SLG-Slugging percentage, OBP-On-base percentage, G-Games, AB-At-bats, R-Runs, H-Hits, 2B-Doubles, 3B-Triples, HR-Home runs, RBI-Runs batted in, TB-Total bases, BB-Walks, SO-Strikeouts, SB-Stolen bases, CS-Caught stealing, E-Errors, W-L-Wins-Losses, ERA-Earned run average, GS-Starts, GF-Games finished, SV-Saves, IP-Innings pitched, HB-Hit batters, WP-Wild pitches, OBA-Opponents' batting average.

PITCHERS	W-L	ERA	G	GS	GF	SV	IP	H	R	ER	HR	HB	BB	SO	WP	OBA
ACOSTA	0-0	2.08	7	0	4	0	8.2	6	2	2	1	0	3	6	0	.194
BENNETT	2-3	2.67	28	0	7	0	27	33	9	8	0	3	15	19	1	.314
CAMPILLO	1-0	4.15	5	0	4	0	4.1	7	3	2	0	0	3	3	0	.389
CARLYLE	0-1	8.84	14	0	6	0	19.1	31	21	19	4	0	11	12	2	.369
GONZALEZ	2-0	2.67	29	0	18	8	27	21	9	8	2	3	13	35	1	.214
HANSON	0-0	9.00	1	1	0	0	6	6	7	6	3	0	1	5	0	.240
JURRJENS	5-4	.285	13	13	0	0	79	71	26	25	4	1	29	55	2	.244
KAWAKAMI	3-6	4.62	11	11	0	0	64.1	65	38	33	6	4	25	51	6	.269
LOWE	7-3	3.44	13	13	0	0	83.2	74	34	32	2	3	25	49	1	.240
MEDLEN	2-2	5.19	4	3	1	0	17.1	12	10	10	0	1	9	18	2	.197
MOYLAN	1-2	5.09	31	0	2	0	23	22	14	13	0	2	16	19	0	.259
O'FLAHERTY	1-0	3.27	31	0	2	0	22	19	9	8	1	4	3	14	0	.235
PARR	0-0	5.79	8	0	4	0	14	17	9	9	1	1	5	12	0	.293
REYES	0-2	7.00	6	5	0	0	27	27	25	21	4	1	13	21	0	.262
SORIANO	1-1	1.57	27	0	10	5	28.2	18	5	5	1	1	10	37	0	.184
VAZQUEZ	4-5	3.31	13	13	0	0	84.1	71	34	31	8	1	16	105	3	.225
ATLANTA	29-30	3.99	59	59	59	13	537	503	261	238	37	26	200	463	18	.250
OPPONENTS	30-29	3.73	59	59	58	15	535.2	515	250	222	44	20	209	376	11	.256


TORONTO BLUE JAYS


ATLANTA BRAVES

Clarence "Cito" Gaston, who broke into the majors with the Braves in 1967 and was an outfielder for them in four other seasons, also beat Atlanta in the 1992 World Series when he became the first African-American to manage a Series winner.


ATLANTA BRAVES

TWO-TIMER

Gaston Enjoying Success In Second Stint As Toronto Manager, Just As He Did The First Time

BY BRIAN KNAPP

INTERMITTENT RAINDROPS tap danced on the visitor's dugout as Clarence "Cito" Gaston surveyed the diamond at Turner Field in late May. Back at the helm of the Toronto Blue Jays, he had returned to Atlanta as a manger for the first time since he became the first African-American to win a World Series in October 1992.

Gaston was in familiar territory in more ways than one.

"I played here for four years," he said. "I always liked the city."

The former Braves outfielder (1967, 1975-78) remains one of baseball's most accomplished field leaders. In 12 seasons at the controls in Toronto, Gaston has won four division titles and two world championships (1992-93), posting more than 700 victories. He returned to the manager's chair last year at mid-season (replacing John Gibbons with the Jays in last place with a 35-39 record) after a decade-long hiatus and instantly turned around a franchise that had fallen into mediocrity. The Blue Jays finished 2008 with a 51-37 (.580) record under Gaston, and this year picked up where they left off by winning 27 of their first 41 games (.659).

Toronto has one of the most potent offensive teams in the American League. A long-time hitting instructor, Gaston places a premium on putting runs on the board.

"We have a little different philosophy," he said. "I say I've got two and a half hitting coaches (Gene Tenace is the actual hitting coach, and first base coach Dwayne Murphy was Arizona's hitting coach when they won the World Series in 2001). I think hitting coaches are important. A lot of times in the minor leagues, teams will have pitching coaches and not hitting coaches. I never understood that. All of us are on the same page. When you walk up to the plate, you have a plan. Guys have bought into it."

The 65-year-old Gaston, his calm but commanding presence permeating the clubhouse, thought he might be finished as a manager after he was fired with five games left in the 1997 season. However, current general manager J.P. Ricciardi changed his course with one phone call last summer.

"I'd kind of given up," said Gaston, who gave himself the nickname "Cito" after a pro wrestler because he didn't like his given name of Clarence. "I was just going to play golf and travel with my wife. J.P. asked me every spring if I thought I'd ever manage again. I told him I was done with the interviews. If someone called and told me it was my team, I'd manage again. He called me, asked me if I wanted to manage again and said, 'This is your team.' I never thought I'd be back."

Gaston, who was the team's hitting coach in 2000-01 and a special assistant to the CEO from 2002 until his return as manager, claims little has changed with his managerial approach.

"It's not any different for me," he said. "The players are different, of course. You manage according to the team you have. You usually don't have the same team two years in a row. Even when we won the World Series [in 1992], we changed 14 players. I always thought of myself as calm and patient, but I think I've gotten more calm and patient. You figure out the things in life you can't do anything about, and you don't worry about them."

Gaston's connection to Bobby Cox – the man he opposed during a three-game series between Atlanta and Toronto in May – runs deep. In fact, Gaston played for Cox in Atlanta in 1978, his final year in the big leagues. As manager of the Blue Jays, Cox gave the San

Antonio, Texas, native his first coaching gig at the major league level in 1982. Gaston remained the team's hitting coach until he was named manager seven years later, replacing Jimy Williams, who then became a Braves coach under Cox. Toronto was 12-24 (.333) under Williams and went 77-49 (.611) under Gaston the rest of the way.

"I owe Bobby a lot, too," Gaston said. "He took me to Toronto. We go back a long ways. He's got a lot to do with me being in the big leagues. There's always a lot of respect from me for him. He taught me the importance of being prepared, how you treat your players – you give respect, you get respect."

Though not nearly as distinguished as a player as he is as a manager, Gaston had his moments. Signed by the Milwaukee Braves as an amateur free agent in 1964, he reached the major leagues three years later. For a time, he roomed with one of his heroes, Hank Aaron.

"It's something you dream about as a kid," Gaston said, "especially him being one of my childhood idols."

He played in only nine games for the Braves in 1967, returned to the minors a year later, and was selected by the San Diego Padres in the 1969 expansion draft (59th pick). There, he enjoyed his greatest success as a player. In 1970, he made the NL All-Star team, and he set career benchmarks in batting (.318, sixth in the league), runs (92), hits (186), doubles (26), triples (9), home runs (29) and runs batted in (93). Gaston never again approached that level of success, and the Braves re-acquired him for 1975 in a trade for righthander Danny Frisella.

In his two stops in Atlanta, covering parts of five seasons, Gaston hit .238 with 14 home runs and 74 RBIs in 258 games.

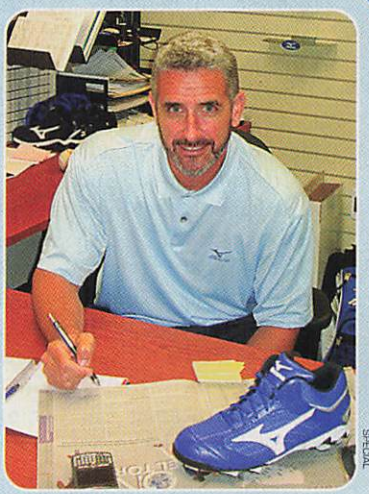
"We didn't have much of a team, but I enjoyed playing here," he said. "When I first came up, I played with guys like Hank Aaron, Joe Torre, Rico Carty and Phil Niekro. [Bob] Uecker was with the club, and so was Felipe Alou."

Presented the Jackie Robinson Lifetime Achievement Award at the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum's annual Legacy Awards in Kansas City this past January, the thrice-married Gaston now resides in Oldsmar, Fla., with his wife of six years, Linda. He has four children and four grandchildren. He's a member of the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and received an honorary Doctor of Laws degree from the University of Toronto. The Jays have never officially retired a uniform number, but Gaston's No. 43 is one of a handful recognized in the team's Level of Excellence.

HOW I MADE IT TO THE MAJORS

JIM GUADAGNO

MANUFACTURER'S REP



SPECIAL

BY STEVE FALL

JIM GUADAGNO sees some parallels between his job and that of a major league general manager. He tries to sign ballplayers to wear Mizuno products, much the way Frank Wren may pursue a coveted free agent.

"After learning of some interest from the player, they'll say, 'Talk to my agent.' And then we'll make a proposal, and we'll get them under contract," said Guadagno, the director of diamond sports and volleyball promotions for Mizuno USA. "Just like, on the baseball side, you try and find the talent and you talk to the agent and try to sign them. It's almost like a free agent signing. You can do a one-year or multi-year deal, based on the player's talent and what level he's in."

Once a player is signed, Guadagno makes sure he has all the Mizuno products he needs, such as gloves, bats, shoes and catching gear. This gives the company visibility and a chance to reach a large television audience.

"We use the player's use of the product as our advertisement," said Guadagno, who played college baseball for Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida. "We don't do a lot of print or television advertisement. When Chipper Jones stands up with his batting gloves when he's hitting, and Tom Glavine holds his glove up and it says Mizuno, that's our advertising."

Mizuno tries to have at least three or four major leaguers in each market. In addition to Jones and formerly Glavine on the Braves, they also have Brian McCann, Jeff Francoeur, Clint Sammons, Brandon Jones, Buddy Carlyle, Jorge Campillo and David Ross under contract. Many ballplayers get signed when they're still in the minors. The 48-year-old Guadagno attends events like the Arizona Fall League, spring training, and the College World Series in his efforts to land talented players.

After completing his master's degree in sports management from the University of Georgia, Guadagno landed a position with the Braves in 1985, using computers to track data. Along with a computer programmer, Guadagno used the data to create a picture of where balls got hit on the field. He also helped with scouting reports and handled some on-field roles like pitching batting practice and catching pitchers in the bullpen.

"So, 17 years later, I was looking for an opportunity to potentially move into a front office situation and use some of my education with the field experience I had," said Guadagno, who was born and raised in Queens, New York. "It was slow to go to find that position. A gentleman with Mizuno that I had come to know through my time in the clubhouse was leaving to take a position with another company, and he asked if I was interested in Mizuno. I said 'Sure, I'll take a look.'"

Guadagno has now spent seven years with Mizuno, based in their U.S. headquarters in the Atlanta suburb of Norcross. He believes young people looking to break into baseball need a strong dedication to the game.

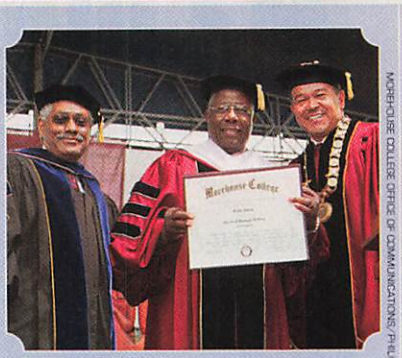
"There's not a lot of glory or money in the beginning stages of the process," he said. "Getting your foot in the door is most important and just working hard. Those glory positions that everybody hears about, there are very few of those. To get in the game, you really have to love the game and be willing to make sacrifices to withstand it."

ALUMNI NOTES

Hank Aaron (OF/1B, 1954-74) received an honorary doctorate of humane letters at Morehouse College commencement May 17 from John Williams, senior vice president for academic affairs and school president Robert M. Franklin Jr.

Commissioner Bud Selig was scheduled to be the presenter for Aaron as one of three Beacon of Change Award recipients June 21 at the Civil Rights Game luncheon in Cincinnati. Sugar Ray Leonard was to present Muhammad Ali, and Bob Gibson was to present Bill Cosby. Former President Bill Clinton was scheduled as the keynote speaker.

Aaron is a partner in Sports Properties Acquisition Corp., which reportedly has agreed to buy the Florida Panthers of the NHL.



MOREHOUSE COLLEGE OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS/PHILIP MOSELLUM

Hank Aaron with his honorary degree from Morehouse, along with school officials John Williams (L) and Robert M. Franklin Jr.

Phil Niekro (RHP, 1964-83, '87) threw out the ceremonial first pitch and signed autographs for three innings at the Wisconsin Timber Rattlers (Brewers' Class-A affiliate) game June 12 in Appleton, Wis.

Niekro spoke to a private National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum gathering May 17 in Columbia, S.C., and participated in the Regions Charity Classic Pro-Am golf tournament at Ross Bridge in Hoover, Ala., on May 14.

Jorge Julio (RHP, 2008) was released by the Brewers and signed a minor league deal with Tampa Bay.

Horacio Ramirez (LHP, 2003-06) was released by Kansas City.

Wilson Betemit (INF, 2001, '04-06) was designated for assignment June 4 by the White Sox.

Blaine Boyer (RHP, 2005-09) was designated for assignment by the Cardinals and picked up by Arizona.

Randy St. Claire (RHP, 1991-92) was fired as pitching coach by Washington June 2.

Mark Kotsay (OF, 2008) was activated June 2 by Boston for the first time since January back surgery.

David Justice (1B/OF, 1989-96) participated in the first annual Project TOUCH and Men of Influence Celebrity Golf Classic fundraiser May 18 at Journey Golf Club at Pechanga Resort & Casino in Temecula, Calif.

Matt DeSalvo (RHP, 2008) signed a minor league contract with Tampa Bay.

John Smoltz (RHP, 1988-99, 2001-08) married Kathryn Darden May 16 at his home outside Atlanta. He reportedly will have another celebration after the season so players can attend.

Paul Bako (C, 2000-01) signed a minor league contract with the Phillies.

Phil Niekro (RHP, 1964-83, '87) and **Javy Lopez** (C, 1992-2003) were among the celebrities scheduled to play in the Bill Mazeroski golf tournament June 15-16 on the Mystic Rock Golf Course at the Nemacolin Woodlands Resort located east of Pittsburgh.

Johnny Logan (SS, 1951-61) signed autographs at the Madison (Wis.) Mallards' season opener June 1.

Dale Murphy (OF/1B/C, 1976-90) made an appearance at the Jacksonville Suns (Marlins' Double-A affiliate) game May 15 to promote his I Won't Cheat Foundation.

BIRTHDAYS

JULY

2ND	TIM SPEHR (43)
3RD	LARRY WHISENTON (53)
	DANNY HEEP (52)
	DAN MEYER (28)
4TH	CHUCK TANNER (80)
	BOBBY MALKMUS (78)
	VINNY CASTILLA (42)
5TH	GARY MATTHEWS (59)
6TH	MARTY MALLOY (37)
	GREG NORTON (37)
7TH	CHUCK GOGGIN (64)
	RICK KESTER (63)
	LEN BARKER (54)
8TH	GENE PATTON (83)
	AL SPANGLER (76)
	JEROME WALTON (44)
9TH	SONNY JACKSON (65)
	GEORGE STONE (63)
10TH	HARRY MACPHERSON (83)
11TH	JOEY MCLAUGHLIN (53)
	ANDY ASHBY (42)
	BLAINE BOYER (28)
12TH	MIKE PAGE (69)
13TH	JACK AKER (69)
	ROB BELLOIR (61)
14TH	PEPE FRIAS (61)
	EARL WILLIAMS (61)
	JOSE HERNANDEZ (40)
	TIM HUDSON (34)
15TH	JUNG KEUN BONG (29)
16TH	**TERRY PENDLETON (49)**
	JORGE VASQUEZ (31)
18TH	JOE TORRE (69)
21ST	DENIS MENKE (69)
	AL HRABOSKY (60)
22ND	BOB PORTER (50)
	GARY EAVE (46)
23RD	VIRGIL JESTER (82)
24TH	CLINT CONATSER (88)
	ETHAN BLACKABY (69)
25TH	BIFF POCOROBA (56)
	JAVIER VAZQUEZ (33)
26TH	PETE WARD (70)
	GREG COLBRUNN (40)
27TH	JOHN EDELMAN (74)
28TH	JERRY MADDOX (56)
	WILSON BETEMIT (29)
	CHAD PARONTO (34)
29TH	FELIX MANTILLA (75)
	TOMMY GREGG (46)
	SETH GREISINGER (34)
30TH	MICKEY MAHLER (57)
31ST	TERRY FOX (74)
	HANK SMALL (56)
	MIKE BIELECKI (50)

ChopTalk
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EDITOR & PUBLISHER

A REAL DEAL

HOW MANY TIMES have the Braves - or any other team - made a trade as early as June 3 to acquire a player that instantly led the club in home runs, RBIs and steals when he put on the uniform for the first time, as Nate McLouth did?

Not many, it's safe to say.

So, McLouth is not a Fred McGriff - and the Braves sure could use a Fred McGriff. The truth is the Braves may ever do better at the trade table than McGriff for Donnie Elliott, Vince Moore and Melvin Nieves on July 18, 1993. But McLouth for Charlie Morton, Gorkys Hernandez and Jeff Locke may come close before all is said and done.

Mark Teixeira and Ron Mahay for Jarrod Saltalamacchia, Elvis Andrus, Neftali Perez, Matt Harrison and Beau Jones on July 31, 2007, looked a lot better at the time than it does now. But the McLouth deal has what the Teixeira deal never had - staying power. McLouth is signed for another three and a half years. He's no Teixeira, but he'll be around longer. In reality, the Braves had zero chance of signing Teixeira and had to part with him after two half seasons and no post-season.

The McLouth deal is the Braves' best mid-season trade since McGriff, and it's the best trade at any point since John Schuerholz picked up Marquis Grissom for Roberto Kelly, Tony Tarasco and Esteban Yan on April 6, 1995, about three weeks before that shortened season began.

How much impact McLouth will make remains to be seen. He's not the type of player that McGriff was, literally picking up a listless team at mid-season and carrying it to a scintillating division title on the last day of the season. But he drastically improved the Braves' lineup immediately, giving hope that not as many strong pitching performances will be wasted in the second half as they were in the first half and that perhaps this team can still gel and make a run at the Phillies.

That might sound a little too optimistic for some people, but those who follow baseball closely know such transitions happen every season. This clever move by Frank Wren gives the Braves a surprisingly productive asset when it was desperately needed. Only three more months of baseball will prove how effective it will be in helping the team shake its run-producing inconsistencies.

Wren's other bold move on the same day as the McLouth trade, which unfortunately came at the expense of Tom Glavine, was to announce that Tommy Hanson was joining the Braves as the fifth starter. Though it's always sad to see the departure of a star player - and few have been as significant to the Braves as Glavine was - Hanson's eagerly anticipated arrival in the majors was yet further evidence of the franchise's dual commitment to try to win now, while also building for the future.

Hanson had mixed success in his first two starts (no decision June 7 in a win against Milwaukee, and his first victory June 12 at Baltimore), but there's no way to ignore his vast potential and the fact that he'd accomplished all he could in the minors and was more than ready for the big test.

"Even though the linescore was not what Tommy would like for his debut, when you look at his performance, it came down to three bad pitches," said Wren. "Unfortunately for him, it didn't turn out the way we'd have liked, but he made a lot of quality pitches, and he's got killer stuff."

Keep in mind that John Smoltz, as an example, was promoted to the majors in July 1988 when he was 21 (Hanson is 22), and he finished the season 2-7 with a 5.48 ERA. Hanson will come, too.

So, also, will his buddy, Kris Medlen, who was bumped to the bullpen by Hanson's arrival.

"Kris Medlen has great stuff, too, and quality pitches across the board," said Wren.

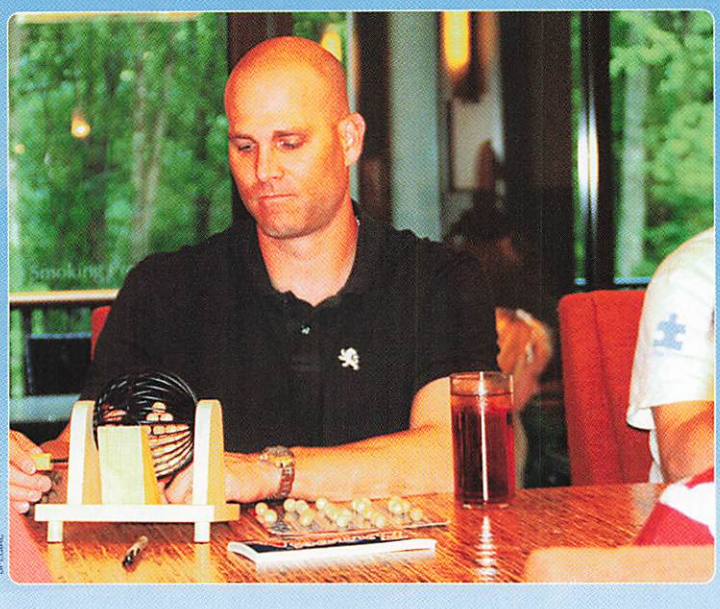
Slowly, perhaps, but just as surely, Wren continues to put the pieces in place that are capable of vaulting this club out of the middle of the pack and into even stronger contention in the second half.

THIS ISSUE OF CHOPTALK was mailed June 19. The August issue will be mailed July 22.

BEYOND BASEBALL

BY **PATTY RASMUSSEN**

Tim Hudson pulls the next number for a Bingo game that followed the first volunteer event of the new Hudson Family Foundation.



SPECIAL

B-I-N-G-O!

THE HUDSON FAMILY Foundation hosted its first volunteer event on June 1, providing a night of Mexican food and fun at the Ronald McDonald House near Emory Hospital in Atlanta. Over 15 volunteers, including **Tim** and **Kim Hudson**, prepared and served dinner to the families who were staying in the house while their children were receiving treatment at nearby Children's Healthcare of Atlanta hospitals. After dinner, the volunteers stayed to play bingo and socialize with the families. Check the Hudson Family Foundation website, hudsonfamilyfoundation.org, and click on the "volunteer" link for other volunteer opportunities.

JAENA NORTON (**Greg**) and **Jessica Carlyle** (**Buddy**) hosted a joint third birthday party for their daughters, **Ciana Norton**, whose birthday was June 6, and **Kennedy Carlyle**, who turned three on June 8. The party was held in the visiting family room at Turner Field on June 7. In addition to cake and ice cream, the guests pounded on piñatas, baseball for the boys and a princess for the girls, and ran the bases after the game...

Veteran sportswriter **Jack Wilkinson** is collaborating on a book with retired Braves Hall of Fame broadcaster **Pete Van Wieren**. The memoir will be published by Triumph Books and is expected to be in bookstores by the start of next baseball season. Wilkinson and Van Wieren traveled to Rickwood Field, the nation's oldest ballpark, in Birmingham, Ala., on May 27 for the annual Rickwood Classic between the Mississippi Braves and Birmingham Barons. Van Wieren was one of several special guests throwing out ceremonial first balls before the game. "It was a great time," said Van Wieren...

Frank Wren was in Savannah May 26 to watch his 16-year old twin sons, **Colby**, who plays third base, and **Kyle**, center field, play in the state private school baseball semi-finals. Their team, the Landmark Christian Academy Eagles, defeated Calvary Day, 13-3 and 7-6, to advance to the state championship game, where they were defeated by Wesleyan. The boys are high school juniors at the school in Fairburn, Ga...

SPECIAL

Greg Norton's daughter, Ciana (L) and Buddy Carlyle's daughter, Kennedy, enjoy a joint third birthday party at Turner Field with cake, ice cream and their friends and families.

Kim Hudson had a fabulous trip to Los Angeles, May 18-21, for the finals of American Idol. Proving that the baseball world is indeed very small, Kim and her traveling companion, **Ginsey Boyer** (**Blaine**, now with the Diamondbacks), were seated two rows in front of **Allyson Ohman**, wife of former Braves reliever **Will Ohman**, who now pitches for the Dodgers. Then, at lunch at the famed Ivy restaurant in Beverly Hills, Kim and Ginsey were seated at a table next to Dodgers manager and former Braves player and manager **Joe Torre**. At the end of May, Kim and son, **Kade**, traveled to Arizona to spend the weekend with Tim while the Braves played the Diamondbacks. The Hudsons joined **Greg** and **Jaena Norton** and their son, **Jace**, and daughter, **Ciana**, for a poolside birthday party at the team hotel celebrating Jace's fourth birthday...

Because the Braves will be arriving home late July 12,

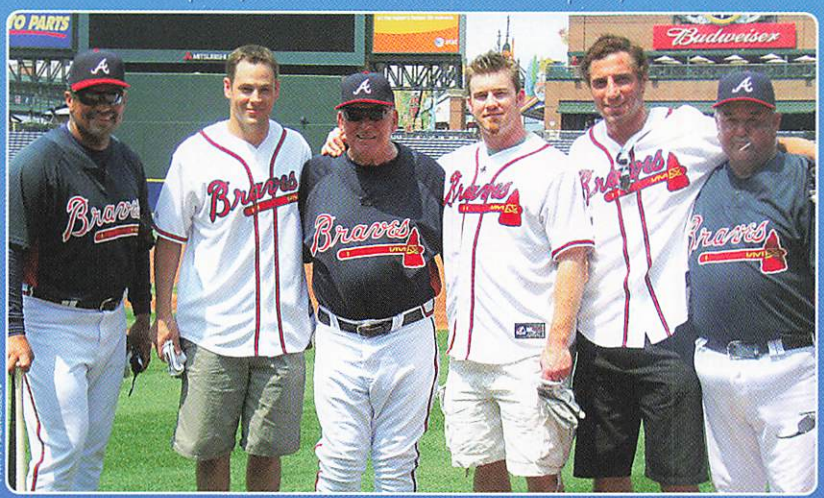
most families are staying close to Atlanta during the All-Star break, July 13-15. **Peter Moylan** is playing the break by ear. "I can't fly home (to Australia)," he said. "I'd be home six hours and would have to get on a plane to come back." Instead, Moylan is considering a quick trip to Las Vegas. **Jeff Francoeur** and his wife, **Catie**, will fly to Florida to spend the break at their home in Seaside. **Jair Jurrjens** said he'll wait to see who's planning to stay in Atlanta before deciding what to do. "Maybe I'll go to my place in Tampa," he said. Of course, he might also be going to St. Louis for the game! **Kelly Johnson** and wife, **Lauren**, plan to stay home. "If we go anywhere, it will be one of the Florida beaches," he said. "Maybe Destin?"

Derek Lowe and his wife, **Carolyn**, hosted his sister, **Deanna Delacher**, and her husband, **Kelly**, who live in Dearborn, Michigan. Deanna and Kelly were in Atlanta for the series against the Toronto Blue Jays, May 22-25. Derek's daughter, **Taylor** (9), and son, **Tanner** (5), were in Atlanta once school let out and were in the stands watching their dad pitch on June 9...

Young **Andres Perez**, son of bullpen coach **Eddie Perez**, gave his mother, **Marisol**, the "ultimate" birthday present at his June 1 Little League game. "He told Marisol that he was going to hit a home run for her birthday," said Eddie. Sure enough, the 11-year-old came through with a grand slam...

Buddy Carlyle was diagnosed with type-1, or "juvenile" diabetes on June 3. He had blood tests to check for the disease after experiencing a loss of weight and energy. Carlyle is managing the disease by injecting himself with insulin five times a day. **Javier Vazquez** has already served as a resource for Carlyle. Vazquez's oldest daughter **Kamila** (5), also has type-1 diabetes, and Vazquez and his wife, **Kamile**, do charity work to raise awareness and funds for a Pediatric Diabetes Center at a hospital in Puerto Rico. "Javier's been great," said Carlyle. "He knows a lot about diabetes because of his daughter, probably more than he would if he had it himself."

ICEMEN COMETH



PATTY RASMUSSEN

Eddie Perez, Bobby Cox and Chino Cadahia huddle with Atlanta Thrashers (L-R) Marty Reasoner, Eric Boulton and Chris Thornburn when the NHL players took a few swings during batting practice.

THREE NHL Atlanta Thrashers players, forwards **Chris Thornburn**, **Eric Boulton** and **Marty Reasoner**, took batting practice on June 9 at Turner Field. "A lot of Thrashers players are big baseball fans," said **Brian Potter**, a member of the Thrashers' public relations staff. "Last year, we brought almost the whole team to Turner Field for a game. It was like a team outing." The batting practice session was filmed by Comcast Sports Southeast for an OnDemand segment called, "All In A Day's Work," which will be available for Comcast subscribers in July. Braves coaches **Eddie Perez** and **Chino Cadahia** provided pitching and instruction and even had some praise. "I hope they had fun," said Cadahia. "I know they have a lot of respect for the game. They know it's hard to hit a baseball." Cadahia attended a couple of Thrashers games during the off-season at the invitation of Thrashers strength and conditioning coach **Ray Bear**, a former strength coach in the Braves organization. Cadahia has come to love watching the sport. "It's a lot of fun to watch," he said. "They move so fast and hit the puck and each other so hard! This year I'm going to try to learn the game a little more.

HOLLYWOOD HUDDY

TIM AND KIM Hudson will spend two days in southern California during the All-Star break in order for Tim to appear in the Hollywood feature film, "Moneyball" based on the book of the same name. The movie, which is currently in pre-production, is directed by **Steven Soderbergh**, of the "Ocean's Eleven" franchise of movies, and will star **Brad Pitt** as A's general manager **Billy Beane**. Hudson was invited to play himself in the film since he was a member of Oakland's 2002 starting rotation. In an interview with MTV, Soderbergh said approximately 60 percent of the 2002 A's are participating, including Braves Hall of Famer **David Justice** (June '09 CT), manager **Art Howe** and pitching coach **Rick Peterson**.

WHETHER YOU'RE HAVING FUN AT TURNER FIELD, EXPERIENCING A CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH YOUR FAVORITE BRAVES PLAYER, OR JUST SHOWING OFF YOUR COLLECTION OF BRAVES STUFF OR TRYING ON YOUR NEW BRAVES SHIRT, WE WANT TO HEAR ABOUT IT AND SEE A PICTURE.

McCANN'S THE MAN

Since we're long-time Braves fans, our children have grown up visiting and watching the Atlanta Braves and the Braves' minor league affiliate, the Myrtle Beach Pelicans. We live only an hour or so from the Myrtle Beach stadium, so we visit the field several times during the season. We have also made it a priority to visit Atlanta at least three times a year as a family to enjoy our Braves.

During Brian McCann's minor league days with the Pelicans (2004), my youngest son grew to like Brian McCann and Jeff Francoeur, and we would wait to catch a glimpse of Brian and maybe an autograph after every game. Brian and Jeff always took time to talk to the fans, sign autographs and take pictures, especially with the kids.

Having the positive experiences with Brian and Jeff, and with my son being a catcher in our local Dixie Youth Baseball league, he really began to look up to McCann. He is now my son's favorite player.

Reading in our local newspaper that Brian was in Myrtle Beach for a rehab assignment, we raced home from work on a Wednesday afternoon (April 29), scooped the kids in the car, and off we went. Since it was a weekday, we were a little late for the game. Thinking we missed our opportunity to see Brian up close, we sat down to enjoy a memorable game with Brian and the MB Pelicans.

As luck would have it, our son and daughter were chosen for an on-field promotion that the Pelicans have between innings. During that time, my son Bryan, mentioned he was there to see Brian McCann and that he was his favorite ballplayer. The PR rep, Julie, with the Pelicans told us how awesome Brian had been during his visit and suggested we wait for a chance at an autograph after the game. Having been there to watch other major league players on rehab assignment, and knowing they typically race off the field to avoid the crowds, we really didn't think much of it, but since he is our son's favorite player, thought it was worth the chance.

I am so thankful we did. McCann was awesome - so polite, so personable, and so gracious. He signed every autograph, took time to talk to the fans, and even took pictures with the fans. I was so proud my son chose him as his "hero."

McCann will never know the joy he brought to my son's life. You couldn't erase the smile from his face for days, and he is still thrilled to tell his friends and family about his up-close encounter with McCann. I just want to express my gratitude and to say what a wonderful asset McCann is to the Braves organization. He is someone our youth can really look up to. Here's a picture Brian let us take with our son, Bryan Meggs. This experience will be etched in his memory forever. Thank you, Brian!

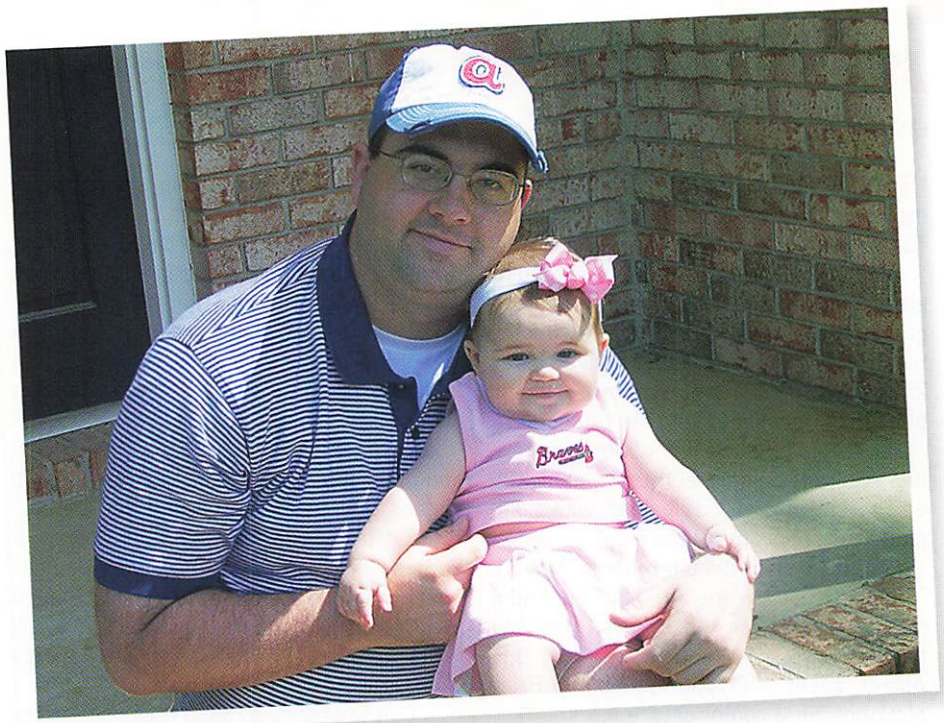
STACY MEGGS
Effingham, S.C.

CHOPTALK AND THE ATLANTA BRAVES SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

GO, TEAM!

Here's my Mother's Day present. It's a picture of my son, Josh Kelly, and my beautiful granddaughter, Camryn, wearing her finest Braves cheerleader outfit! She can't wait to go to her first game with Daddy and Grandma! I bought her this outfit before she was even born and couldn't wait for her to grow into it. I know she will be as big a Braves fan as we are. Not sure yet who her favorite Brave is, but I'm betting on Matt Diaz. Go Braves!

GAIL KELLY
Gray, Ga



MISSING A FAN

My grandfather, E.D. Johnson of Hahira, Ga., passed away Feb. 4, at age 91. He very seldom missed a Braves game. The new season has my grandmother down, and watching games makes her miss him even more. It makes me miss him even more, too. Can you mention his name in your magazine? It would mean a lot to my grandmother, Eathel Johnson of Hahira, Ga., if you could do that.

LEE JACKSON
Valdosta, Ga.

SHARE YOUR BRAVES FEVER!

WRITE TO US

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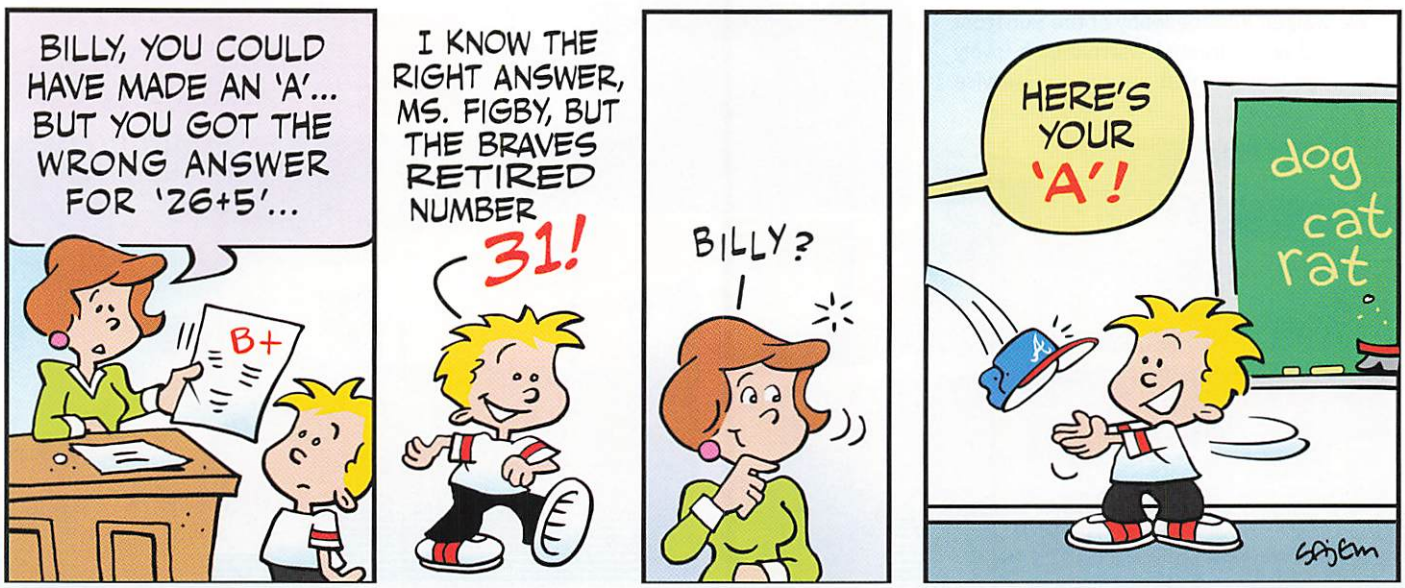
Atlanta Braves
P.O. Box 4064
Atlanta, Ga. 30302

For the Braves players, Bobby Cox, the coaches, broadcasters, or members of the front office.

If you request a response, be sure to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Never send anything of value that you want returned. This is no guarantee of a reply.

MADDUX MATH


BILLY, YOU COULD HAVE MADE AN 'A'... BUT YOU GOT THE WRONG ANSWER FOR '26+5'...
B+
I KNOW THE RIGHT ANSWER, MS. FIGBY, BUT THE BRAVES RETIRED NUMBER 31!
BILLY?
HERE'S YOUR 'A'!
dog
cat
rat

A BALLGAME UP CLOSE AND IN STYLE

BY PATTY RASMUSSEN

I SAT DOWN in the wide, padded seat on the second row of the SunTrust Club at Turner Field, and knew I was ruined.

How could I ever go back to a regular plastic seat in the stands after watching a game from the field level comfort of the SunTrust seats behind home plate, you know, the seats that are closer to home plate than the pitcher is to the catcher?

How could I watch a game without unlimited access to a gourmet menu that included Thai chili flash fried calamari with a dipping sauce of cilantro-lime aioli?

I got the e-mail the afternoon of May 21: "My SunTrust tix are available on Friday night (May 22) for the Braves/Blue Jays game if anyone is interested," wrote B.B. Abbott, agent of Chipper Jones and Brian McCann. "First comer gets 'em."

At $278 a pop, the SunTrust Club tickets are definitely way out of my price range, so I jumped at the chance to use B.B.'s tickets. And fortunately for me, no one else was available to use them. I won the "lottery."

Ronnie Snitker, wife of third base coach Brian Snitker, was my date for the evening. Like me, she was eager to experience the game in a different way. Because we already have parking privileges in the media lot, neither of us used the nifty valet parking service, though I was tempted to drive up to the SunTrust entrance on the back side of the ballpark just to say I'd had my 1997 Toyota Corolla valet parked alongside the Jaguars, Mercedes and Range Rovers.

We walked into the lobby of the SunTrust Club and were greeted warmly by a lovely concierge who pointed out the full-service bar to the left, the tapas (appetizer) bar to the right, and the two serving stations. That night's offering included beef tenderloin with garlic mashed potatoes and an Asian seafood noodle bowl. Our helpful waiter also informed us that we could order any of the items on the menu. Yes, they had usual ballpark fare, but instead of a plain hot dog on a bun, the SunTrust Club offered a "kosher all-beef frank on a warm challah bun," and nachos complete with "charro beans, queso sauce, salsa and sour cream."

Our trusty waiter took the liberty of ordering for us, and soon we were munching on calamari, a tangy lobster roll topped with red pepper mayonnaise, and my favorite, Buffalo-style seasoned fries served with blue cheese dressing.

"Can I substitute ranch dressing for the blue cheese?" I asked. "No problem," said the waiter.

Meanwhile, out in the real world, the tarp was on the field and the game was delayed. To be perfectly honest, we never even noticed! After a 20-minute delay, the start of the game was announced, and the club area cleared out.

Our seats were situated halfway down the second row on the home side of the field. We were literally three feet from Yunel Escobar as he took his warmup swings. Since the seats are level with the field, it can be difficult to see all the plays in the outfield, but a flat-screen television built into the wall in front of the first row enabled us to see every dazzling play.

Fortunately for us, Kenshin Kawakami was battling the Blue Jays' Roy Halladay that evening in a classic pitcher's duel, keeping most of the action right at home plate. We had a fantastic view of the pitcher setting up, delivering the ball, even the communication between pitcher and catcher.

Throughout the game, an attentive waitress checked with us about whether we wanted anything from the menu - drinks, ice cream, whatever. At the top of the seventh inning, a dessert buffet was laid out inside the club. Naturally, we had to taste the mini crème brulee and Key lime tarts, which were rounded out with a mellow cup of coffee.

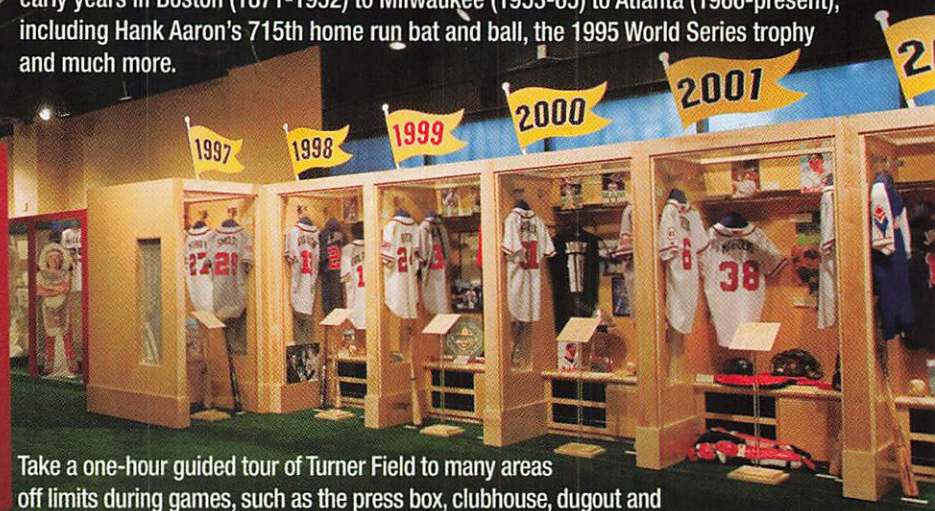
After the game's very satisfying conclusion - the Braves won, 1-0, behind eight masterful innings by Kawakami and Mike Gonzalez's ninth-inning work - Ronnie and I enjoyed the Friday night fireworks to cap our evening. All in all, it was a fun experience and one I'd love to enjoy again. I sure hope B.B. Abbott reads this!

ChopTalk's Patty Rasmussen (L) and Ryan Snitker's wife, Ronnie, enjoy a game directly behind home plate in the plush and prime location of the SunTrust Club.

PHOTOS: ATLANTA BRAVES

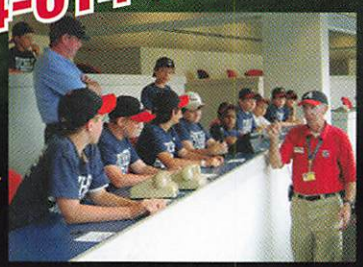
VISIT TODAY!

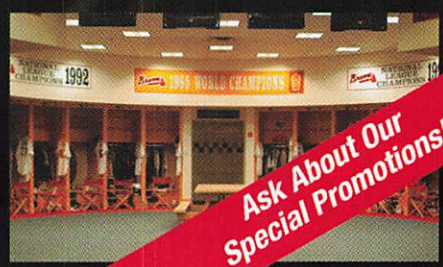
Visit the Braves Museum & Hall of Fame at Turner Field and view more than 600 Braves artifacts and photographs on display. See items from the team's early years in Boston (1871-1952) to Milwaukee (1953-65) to Atlanta (1966-present), including Hank Aaron's 715th home run bat and ball, the 1995 World Series trophy and much more.



TOUR TURNER FIELD 404-614-2311

Take a one-hour guided tour of Turner Field to many areas off limits during games, such as the press box, clubhouse, dugout and the SunTrust Club. Group and school tours are offered year-round, including specialized tours on the subjects of math, social studies, art and careers in sports. Call 404-614-2311.





Ask About Our Special Promotions!

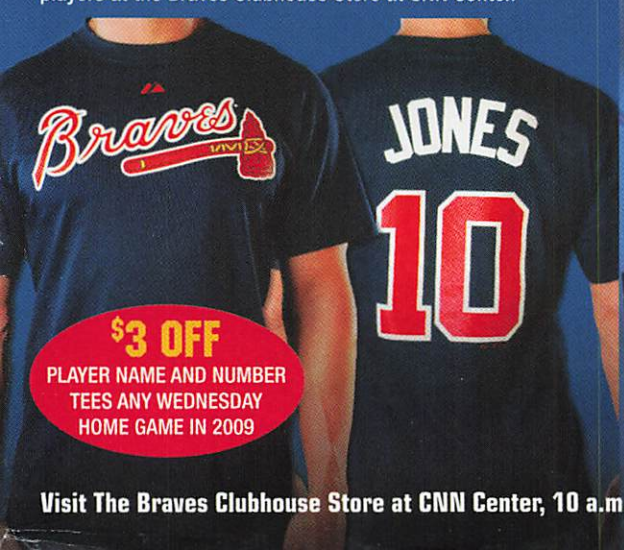
2009 HOME GAMES BRAVES CLUBHOUSE STORE TO OFFER FANS A CHANCE TO WIN A REPLICA JERSEY

"WALK OFF WEDNESDAYS" PROMOTION

WEDNESDAYS ONLY! PURCHASE PLAYER TEES AT CNN CENTER

FANS COULD WIN A BRAVES REPLICA JERSEY

Each Wednesday home game of the 2009 season will provide fans an opportunity to win a replica jersey. Fans can purchase a specially-priced name and number t-shirt of select Braves players at the Braves Clubhouse Store at CNN Center.



$3 OFF PLAYER NAME AND NUMBER TEES ANY WEDNESDAY HOME GAME IN 2009

If the player whose t-shirt was purchased hits a walk-off home run that same day, the fan will receive a replica jersey.

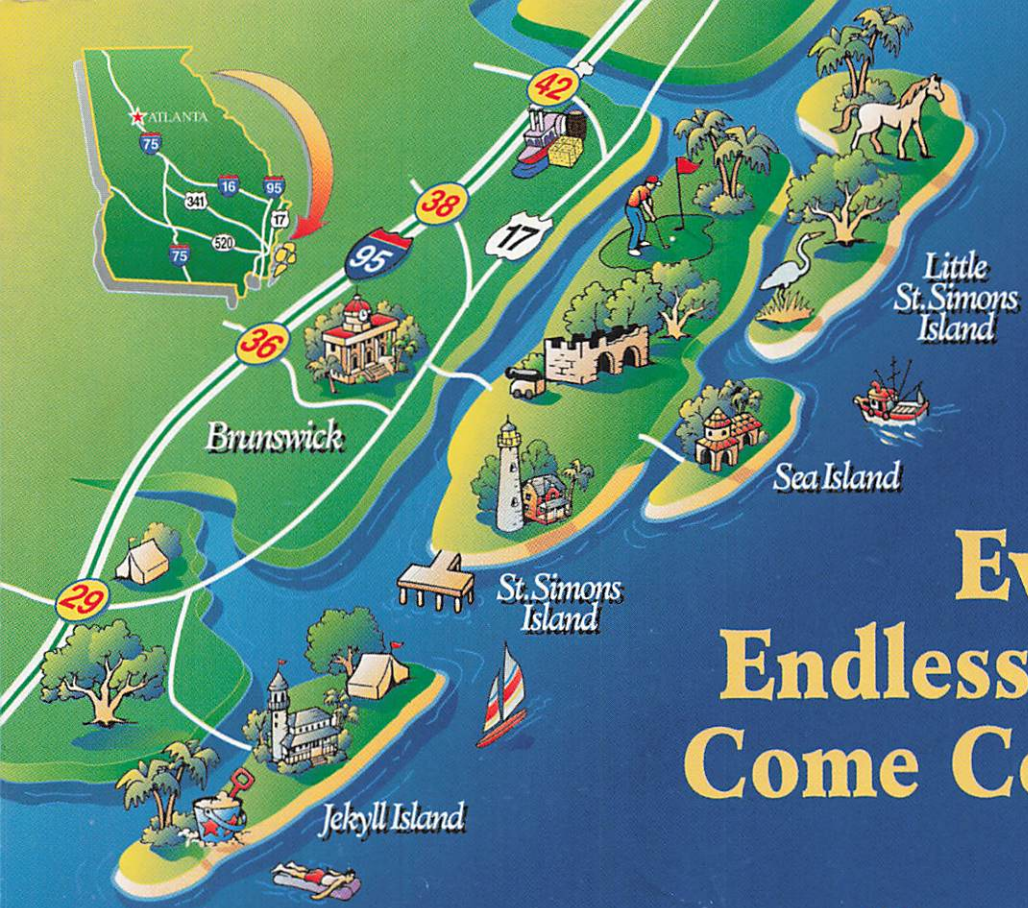
This promotion will take place during Wednesday home Braves games starting April 15th for the 2009 Season. Certain restrictions may apply. Subject to official rules. For complete rules and an entire selection of Braves player t-shirts, visit the Braves Clubhouse Store.

SHOP CNN CENTER!

Braves CLUBHOUSE STORE

We've Outfitted The Braves, We Can Do The Same For You

Visit The Braves Clubhouse Store at CNN Center, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily or call 404-523-5854 for information.



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Brunswick & The Golden Isles of Georgia. Unhurried. Unspoiled. Unmatched for countless diversions and pleasures. Vast marshlands, winding rivers, and ribbon-smooth beaches. Centuries-old oaks draped in moss. The stunning beauty of this corner of Georgia is legendary.

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Cross the fabled Marshes of Glynn and behold The Golden Isles. St. Simons Island, Sea Island, Little St. Simons Island and Jekyll Island. Beaches so perfect for swimming, strolling, shelling, sunning. A mecca for shoppers, pure paradise for golf and tennis lovers. Historic sites by the dozens, fresh seafood by the pound. And accommodations of every description from budget to luxury to camping and rental cottages.

Where I-95 bends toward the sea, pull off and coast awhile. The hospitality, like the climate, welcomes year-round. Brunswick & The Golden Isles. Enjoy them each. Explore them all.

For a free vacation planning guide: 1-800-933-COAST (2627)

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